

S Y S T E M

OF

SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMAS.


BY DENTON J. SNIDER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

SECTION I. — SCOPE AND CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT WORK.

It may be reasonably required of an author to save his readers, as far as he is able, from disappointment. The study of Shakespeare has developed into numerous specialties; many who pursue one branch of it with zeal disregard, or even despise, its other branches; such persons generally do not want to be troubled with any work which lies outside of their particular direction. The present book undertakes to give a special phase of the Shakespearian Drama. Lest the reader should expect something not contained in it, at the beginning I wish to tell him what he need not look for, and also to give a general statement of its purport.

That realm of learning which pertains to the language of Shakespeare — the philological element — has been entirely omitted. Grammatical, metrical, textual, and other similar researches, have accumulated to an enormous extent around the works of the Poet; this is a great field of erudition by itself. Now, it is absolutely necessary to have such a literature; linguistic study, up to a certain point, is the foundation of all solid knowledge of Shakespeare. Still, language itself is only a means for a higher object; hence these researches must

be regarded merely as instrumentalities — important, but not final.

The historical side of Shakespearian criticism is not considered. Dates of the plays, sources of the plots, allusions of contemporaries, facts of the Poet's life, books that he read, editions of his works, everything, down to the most insignificant historical details, have been already diligently collected, and the field seems pretty well gleaned. At least in this western part of the world there is little prospect of discovering any new Shakespearian documents. There remains the choice between oft-repeated repetition and silence; of the two, the latter seems preferable.

Nor is there to be found here any indulgence in that favorite pastime of erudite leisure which may be called the sport of probabilities. Upon a very small fragment of an historical fact there is reared a colossal air-palace of conjecture — perhaps a harmless, but certainly a very insubstantial, edifice. What difference does it make, in the judgment of Shakespeare's work, whether he was a Catholic or Protestant; whether, indeed, he was called Shakespeare, or by some other name? His book remains the same, and must be judged as it is; any argument to the contrary implies that our view of Shakespeare is to be determined by our view of something else, or of somebody else.

The purely literary element of Shakespearian criticism — that species of criticism which points out the beauties of the Poet, and glows over them in rapturous exclamations and figurative convulsions — may now and henceforth be reasonably omitted. Indeed, the poetry of Shakespeare must be left largely to the reader, for it appeals to the emotions and the imagination, while criticism ought rather to

address the understanding. The poetical sense is immediate, natural; it cannot be conferred, though it may doubtless be aided by pointing out for it the beautiful passages of a poem. At least this phase of criticism does not fall within the scope of the present undertaking.

In general, the aim of this book is to show each drama as a Whole, in its thought, organization, and characters; then to group cognate dramas into a higher Whole by their common fundamental principle; at last, to behold all the dramas of the Poet as one Whole—in fine, to sum up Shakespeare. Such a plan, if successful, will unfold the SYSTEM OF THE SHAKESPEARIAN DRAMA.

To a system of this kind neither too great nor too little value must be ascribed. If we make it a substitute for the beautiful poetic form of which it is hardly more than a skeleton, we misapply it totally. Criticism is not poetry, and cannot take the place of poetry. On the other hand, an utter resignation to the sensuous glow of passion is not the true poetical habit. Mere gratification of the senses is bestial, and Art may, in this way, be degraded into an instrument of sensuality. The inner spiritual essence must always be felt through—nay, be seen through. Then there is a genuine appreciation; then, too, the senses are lifted up into the realm of beauty, and become angels of purity, by means of the indwelling spirit. Poetry has both sides—a sensuous and an intellectual; it is not in itself a philosophy, but, without a philosophy, it is in danger of being turned into a temple of the grossest passions.

It will doubtless be disagreeable to some very ardent admirers of the Poet to descend into the depths of his spiritual being, and there behold the foundation of his

Art. They say that his procedure is unconscious and instinctive; why, then, foist upon him a system? So is the procedure of nature unconscious; still, it is the great spiritual vocation of our age to discover nature's law. Take Shakespeare merely as a wonderful phenomenon of nature, is it not reasonable—indeed, is it not necessary—to seek for his law also? Be assured the human mind enjoys no repose in ignorance. Then, too, Shakespeare was not the unconscious baby that babies would make him out. He thought; he planned; he mostly knew what he was doing. It is an absurdity to declare that, in a world where thought alone is greatness, its greatest man was an unthinking prodigy.

Still, the protest of the poetic temperament must be heard, and in a due degree heeded, for it seeks to call the mind back to beauty, away from excessive abstraction. A one-sided pursuit always warps the power of just discrimination; any Shakespearian specialty has a tendency to unfit its follower for a full enjoyment of the poetry. A man who is in the habit of centering his attention solely upon the grammar, upon the meter, or upon the figures, will certainly fail of the total impression. It is well known that some of the acutest verbal critics, and most learned commentators on Shakespeare, have shown an utter want of all poetic sense. The same fate must overtake the person who too exclusively looks for the abstract thought of an artistic product. As the work of beauty springs from the happy interpenetration of spirit and sense, so the true appreciation must conjoin the two elements—must both feel and know in one. Still, criticism has to give expression to the side of intelligence, since the side of feeling can only be uttered adequately in the realm of

poetry. Let it not be forgotten, then, that Art is Thought in a sensuous form; that it is not a system of Pure Thought on the one hand, nor is it an embodiment of Pure Sensuality on the other.

SECTION II. — THE DRAMATIC: ITS RELATION TO OTHER POETICAL FORMS, AND ITS GENERAL CHARACTER.

The Drama represents man in action. It exhibits him in the infinite web of his complications, with influences passing out from him and coming back to him, and thereby portrays, in the shortest space and in the most striking manner, the relative worth of human deeds. Nor does it rest content with the mere external doings of man; on the contrary, it penetrates his innermost nature, and probes the profoundest depths of his spiritual being. For it unfolds motives, ends, convictions; and, in fact, these internal elements constitute its most important feature. They form the basis of what is called Character, and their true value as well as their logical relation are exhibited in the development and outcome of the dramatic work.

The Drama is the most concrete, and therefore the highest, of all the forms of Poetry. The Epos is the product of national childhood; it contemplates man in an intellectual infancy which demands the continuous supervision of the gods. It, therefore, lays stress upon the Objective, the Universal; not, however, as meditated through the spirit of man, but as an existence standing outside of him and determining his actions. Hence the tinge of Fate which prevails in all Epic Poetry; for the contradiction between Freedom and Necessity is not yet

developed by this early consciousness. Still, self-determination may, and in fact ought to, peer through these external forms in a naive, unconscious manner; such is the case with Homer, who often seems to make the gods his sport. The Epos, therefore, may be said to be essentially religious, and seeks to unfold, if not to justify, the ways of Providence to man.

The Lyric Poet, on the contrary, portrays his own emotions, desires, reflections—in fine, the entire content of his own subjectivity. Still, there must be felt in his song something of universal significance; it must bring into sympathetic concord the heart of a people, of a whole age. His strain may be one of joy and happiness, or of sadness and despair; it also very often turns to an incessant lamentation about his own injured and unappreciated self, or to a stinging censure of the cold, heartless world. He thus falls out with the existing order of things, becomes negative and skeptical, assails and undermines the ancient faith and simple epical feeling. So old Simonides was accused of impiety. But to mention all the phases of the lyrical form of poetry would be here unnecessary, if not impossible; it is as varied and boundless as the nature of man, and extends into all periods of civilization. Its general characteristic, however, is subjective, and it portrays man, not in action, but resting in feeling and reflection.

But in the Drama all this is changed. Man starts up from the repose in which he has been describing and nursing his emotions, and begins to act—that is, he begins to give his subjective nature validity in the external world. His feelings, passions, hopes, ends, are no longer satisfied with quiet, lyrical description, but must

take on the form of reality. Nor, again, are these ends which he is trying to realize always merely subjective; on the contrary, they represent objective principles of universal validity, as Right, Family, State. Hence the Dramatic is the concrete unity of the Epic and Lyric; not a mixture of the two, but an entirely new species. The Drama represents an action like the Epos; but it must abandon the principle of external divine interference, and put in its stead the self-conscious, self-acting individual. Hence no demons, angels, or gods are allowed to perform the mediations of the Drama in its highest manifestations; all is human, and expressive of human freedom. For there can be only one reason why the Drama is the highest of all the forms of Art: It most adequately represents self-determination—man as a free, and hence responsible, being. To express the same thought in the more precise, yet more abstruse, terms of philosophy, the Dramatic is the complete unity and double interpenetration of the Epic and Lyric; on the one hand, it unites the subjective side of the latter with the objective side of the former by making the objective world inherent in the subject, thus filling his emptiness and giving him the truest content; on the other hand, it portrays the subject, giving validity to himself in the objective world through his own activity.

If, therefore, the Epical consciousness is essentially religious, and the Lyrical may become negative, and even skeptical, the Dramatic, on the other hand, is ethical. But this ethical characteristic is made up, not merely of a single principle, but embraces a series of principles which form a regular gradation from the lowest to the highest. Hence it is possible for a lower principle to collide with

a higher. It is just this conflict which constitutes the source of all dramatic action. As the science of Ethics, if truly elaborated, would show all these principles, in their proper relation and subordination, from a theoretical point of view, so the Drama in a practical way, by means of human action, exhibits in victory or defeat, success or failure, the true relation and subordination of these same ethical principles. It calls man before its tribunal and unfolds to him the consequences of his deeds, not in an abstract form, but in the form of the deed itself. For this purpose the Drama takes the individual, not in the fixed shapes of Sculpture, or in the colored figurations of Painting, but as he is in reality, in flesh and blood; it must have the living person as the bearer of its principle.

If we consider the Drama in this light, it is not the trivial, sportive toy which furnishes amusement for an idle hour, but it assumes immense proportions. We shall find that it is only another form of proposing the greatest of problems — a new way that people have of looking at the profoundest questions of human existence. For the Drama is certainly based upon the Ethical World; its collisions must rest upon elements inherent in the ethical order of things, and its solutions, if true — which is the same as artistic — must be in accordance with this order. Therefore, to judge of the Drama, we have to know something of the Ethical World — its contradictions and its harmonies, its principles and the manner of their subordination; or, if we do not know these things already, the Drama may be able to give the requisite instruction. And, furthermore, since the Ethical World is the realization of Reason, we are led, through the Drama, to ask ourselves the more important question: What is the abso-

lutely Rational? Not as an idle question of speculation, but as the vital fount of action; as the guiding thread of Life ought we to consider such a theme. The Rational in the Drama and the Rational in Thought and Action cannot well be different; indeed, the one is only the adumbration of the other. So the Drama, in its highest utterances, takes up the problem of Life and solves it in its own peculiar manner. The clash of appetites and passions; the conflict of rights and duties; the alarming hand of Fate reaching over, grasping after all; and, most prominently, the beneficent form of Freedom standing on a heap of broken chains, are there portrayed, the opposing forces reconciled and reduced to one harmonious, well-ordered system. Thus we may learn a practical, as well as an æsthetic, truth of incalculable value — that the Rational in the Drama is the Rational in Life. By these remarks we hope it may be seen that Dramatic Art is no mere abstraction, distinct from, or opposed to, the real world — no plaything to amuse those refined and elegant natures who long to fly away from this groveling sphere to realms ideal, there to bathe in the sunlight of eternal truth, but it clings to earth, and is the most intensely human of all Art. Nor has the human mind ever failed to appreciate its significance as furnishing a reflex of the highest endeavors and greatest achievements of the race.

There is one man to whom we all instinctively turn with the certainty of finding a rational basis — Shakespeare. Criticism has worn itself almost threadbare upon him, and we often are sated with the interminable talk about him, the most of which is so unsatisfactory; still, we have always to come back to his works as the unfailing source of the highest intellectual and artistic enjoyment. People

feel that his is the greatest name in all literature — perhaps in all history. But this is not enough; we must know what is the special form of his greatness. And so the question arises: Wherein is Shakespeare the greatest of authors? We cannot say in the perfection of form, for herein others, perhaps, surpass him; nor in the mastery of language, for this is a knack which may be learned, and, moreover, means little by itself; nor in the beauty of his images, for they are often confused, incongruous, and far-fetched; not even in characterization; nor in the management of an action, in the strict sense of the term. Great as his excellence in these things, it has been attained, sometimes at least, by far inferior writers. There can be no doubt in the statement that the unique and all-surpassing greatness of Shakespeare lies in his comprehension of the ethical order of the world. Though this side of his genius has been always most inadequately stated, and commonly has been passed over entirely in the essays of his critics, still men have instinctively felt that his works were the truest literary product of modern times, because they were the most perfect and concrete presentation of realized rationality. Men see in him their highest selves, and hence must take him as their greatest exponent. The contrast, in this respect, with even the best creations of nearly all other poets is most striking. We read them; we are charmed with the imagery, the thoughts, the rhythmic flow of the verse. But when we come to the end of one of these works we are confused, lost; we analyze it more closely, and find that the Whole, however beautiful its individual parts, is an ethical chaos. But Shakespeare, in this sphere as elsewhere, is all harmony; no contradictions cloud his poet-

ical horizon, nor does he ever make the *dénouement* a logical annihilation of the entire play.

The supreme question concerning the Shakespearian Drama — or, indeed, concerning any great work in Literature — may be stated in this form: What is the world in which it moves? The Poet, along with every rational being, must have, consciously or unconsciously, his ultimate principle, his deepest conviction, concerning the government of this universe. Here is the point in which every inquiry must finally center, and by which the author is to be judged. It is, hence, the very essence of all critical investigation; also of all true poetical activity. As a preparatory survey of the subject, the following three distinctions may be grasped separately at first, then fused together into one complete thought; thus the parts may be seen in the Whole.

First. The Shakespearian Drama is ethical. It represents man as controlled from within, by the forms of his own intelligence; and not from without, by external powers. Human Reason begins to realize itself by subordinating the desires of the flesh and the caprices of the Individual to its Law; it subjects the Bad to the Good, the Negative to the Positive; otherwise, man would become the victim of himself. The nature of "appetite," and the result of its supremacy, are stated by Shakespeare himself with a logical precision:

"Appetite, an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce an universal prey,
And last eat up itself."

With this subordination of appetite begins the Ethical World — a system of principles in which the Individual

finds, or ought to find, the reflex of his higher Self, and to which he must subject what is lower. But here arises a new difficulty. These ethical principles are both numerous and of very different kinds; hence they, in their own sphere, may come into collision.

Second. The Shakespearian Drama, therefore, has to portray a world of conflict. This is the element which gives to it interest, life, movement. Two men are animated with opposite principles, and undertake to carry them into execution; each may think that he is right, and, indeed, each may be right; both appeal to their intellectual and physical resources, and draw into the contest others with whom they are connected. The result is, the Ethical World is filled with fierce struggles and dire confusion; it is not the placid ideal realm, where the mind may dwell in repose and feed on spiritual beauty. The emphatic point is that the principles are in conflict; the Individual is only their bearer, their representative. This gives what, in strictness, may be called the Dramatic Collision. It would seem to be one of the chief functions of Shakespearian criticism to unfold these collisions of ethical principles in whatever form they occur in a play; only thus can be reached the innermost germ of a dramatic action.

Third. The Shakespearian Drama has to give the solution; it has to mediate its conflicts, and bring all colliding elements into harmony. Through struggle it passes to repose; to war succeeds peace. This may be the peace of death, as is the case with the tragic character; it may be the peace which comes through repentance; or it may be the peace from an exploded absurdity. But the Shakespearian Solution, in whatever shape it occurs, has one fundamental principle—the return of the deed upon

the doer. Man has that which he has done brought home to him in the end; his action, often through the most devious and subtle passages, sweeps back and includes himself. Eternal, divine justice it may be called; indeed, it is found already named, in some of these plays, "justice of God." To the superficial eye its course seems, in some cases, past all finding out; but a knowledge of the Ethical World of Shakespeare, and the gradation of its principles, will reveal the mighty form of an all-controlling Justiciary.

To grasp these three points together in one statement, the Shakespearian Drama unfolds the order of ethical principles as realized in the Individual, and in him moving through conflict to final reconciliation. It, therefore, portrays a movement—a movement through struggle to repose. Such is the first glimpse of the world called into existence by Shakespeare, the vague outlines of which are now to be completed to the fullness of reality. For his work may be well called a world—a world in its vastness, variety, and harmony; an ideal world filled with ideal shapes, which flit amid an ideal scenery. Yet it is only a picture of our Earth, an adumbration of human spirit, and hence all men sweetly fraternize with its airy forms.

The development of the subject may now proceed in the following order:

First, we wish to behold the foundation of the Poet's dramatic edifice; this is the Ethical World, which must, therefore, be shown in its complete organization. Second, we are to witness the principles of this Ethical World passing into man and becoming the mainspring of his activity; he, then, is the Dramatic Individual endowed with Character. Third, we are to see these dramatic indi-

viduals grouping themselves in organic relation, and developing according to the inherent necessity of their natures; this will show the Threads and Movements, the elements of Dramatic Structure. Fourth, the single dramas must also be organized into the unity of a system; this will exhibit the Classification of the Shakespearian Drama.

SECTION III. — THE ETHICAL WORLD OF SHAKESPEARE.

The statement has already been made that it is an Ethical World in which the Shakespearian Drama moves. Our object is now to bring into a proper system of gradation its manifold principles; for, when these collide, the higher must not be brought under the lower — that which is most true must be supreme. The law is, everywhere, subordination to the Rational. Even appetite is not bad within its just limits; but, when it conflicts with what is higher, it turns to evil. So, too, an ethical principle, otherwise valid, may become wrong if it stands in the way of another ethical principle better and truer than itself. Such is the Shakespearian conception of this Ethical World; it may be called a graded hierarchy of principles, one over another to the most exalted; each subordinates all which lie beneath, and is subordinated by all which lie above.

Hence, in the Dramatic Collision, it is not necessary that one side be affirmed to be absolutely right, the other absolutely wrong. The thought must be held fast that principles collide — ethical principles. Both sides, therefore, are guilty, yet both sides have a ground of justification; each has to assail what is valid in maintaining what is valid. It is a genuine conflict of duties, perplex-

ing to the soul often, and difficult of decision. The Dramatic Solution, however, must indicate which principle is supreme.

Of this Ethical World there are two grand divisions — the *Institutional* and the *Moral* — each of which is represented in the Shakespearian Drama. Both are forms of rational subordination; the former is objective, existent outside of the Individual, though at the same time the product of his deepest spiritual nature; the latter is subjective, existent within the Individual, whereby he is controlled according to his own ideas of right and duty. A verbal distinction should here be carefully observed by the reader. The word *ethical* is not employed synonymously with the word *moral*, though general usage does not distinguish between them. Throughout the present work this distinction, so vital for the correct comprehension of Shakespeare and his Ethical World, will not be neglected, unless by some mistake.

I. THE INSTITUTIONAL ELEMENT. — Institutions seem to be wholly external to man, yet they are really the creation of his Reason. They seem, at times, to be hostile to him also, but they are truly his greatest protection — indeed, the necessary condition of his rational existence. Only through them can he rise above the narrow limits of selfishness into a universal life. Filled with their spirit, he has the Divine within him, and is able to elevate himself to the heroic character. The Individual may be moved by them instinctively or consciously — the first way being the more common, the second being the more perfect; or, he may turn against them, and trample them down with a relentless enmity. Hence arise the collisions of this realm.

In the Shakespearian Drama there are mainly two of these institutional principles — the Family and the State. Both are found in all of the Poet's plays, with two or three exceptions, though with different degrees of importance. The Family is usually the more prominent in the legendary pieces; the State in the historical pieces. Each within itself is capable of many phases; any one of these phases may conflict with another. Hence springs the collision, the true fountain of all dramatic activity. A short summary of the different phases employed by Shakespeare may now be given.

1. *The Family*. — This is the institution which rests most deeply in the emotions of man, and hence is the main realm of Poetry. Its various members are united together, as it were, into one person; they are but limbs of a single body which feels for, and with, all of them. Let, therefore, a limb be plucked away, or in any manner deeply affected, the feeling is transmitted through the whole organism of the Family; what one member suffers, the rest suffer along with him. Such is the deep sympathetic unity which lies at the basis of this institution, it has a special name; it is called Love. Now, Love assumes several very distinct forms, according to the different relations possible in the Family, as the Love of Husband and Wife, Brother and Sister, Parent and Children, Lover and Lady-love. Hence arises the Collision in the Family, for its separate forms may conflict with one another; thus its tender emotional character is rent with struggle and contradiction which must deeply affect both sides as bound up together in the same domestic body.

First is the form of Love going before and leading to the Family — the Love of Man and Woman. It is, there-

fore, based on the difference of sex, which difference, however, is always seeking to be harmonized into unity through feeling. Two persons of opposite sexes are driven, by the strongest impulse of their natures, into the oneness of the Family. Such is the manifestation of the love of Man and Woman, which may be justly called the most universal theme in Literature. But now something comes in between the two individuals; an obstacle interferes with their unity, whereby it may be threatened or even destroyed. Hence arises the Collision of Love, which strikes every note, from the deepest Tragedy to the lightest Comedy. The nature of the obstacle is various; in the Shakespearian Drama it is most commonly the will of the parent. Often, too, the obstacle is not external, but internal, whereof the most frequent instance is unrequited love. The conflict between parents and lovers has manifold shades in Shakespeare. It is tragic in *Romeo and Juliet*; serious, but with happy conclusion, in *Merchant of Venice* (Portia), and in other dramas of like character; comic in *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Anne Page), and elsewhere in the comedies. Unrequited love is tragic in the case of Paris, in *Romeo and Juliet*, but has quite every phase, from earnest elevation to wild burlesque, in *Twelfth Night*. A more detailed treatment of these various forms of the Collision of Love will be given when the special consideration of the separate plays takes place.

Second, from this first relation there follows, naturally, the relation of Husband and Wife. The unity of the Family, which, in the previous form, was merely subjective, is now realized in marriage, and in a common life. But this unity, too, may be assailed from without by the villain, liar, seducer; or it may be destroyed from within

by one or by both of the members through uncongeniality, jealousy, infidelity. Thus we behold a new phase of the domestic collision, that of Husband and Wife, which is tragic in *Othello*, mediated by the wife in *All's Well That Ends Well*, comic in *Merry Wives of Windsor* (the jealous husband, Ford); which examples, however, do not, by any means, exhaust the list in the Shakespearian Drama.

Third, from this second relation of the Family springs, in natural sequence, a new one — that of Parent and Child. Already one phase of the collision thence resulting has been noticed — namely, parental authority against the right of love on the part of the child. This is, indeed, Shakespeare's favorite theme, if we may judge from its frequent employment; his solution is universally against the parent—at least in his comedies. But the great Tragedy of Parent and Child is *King Lear*, in which this relation is the sole content of the entire drama.

Fourth, then comes the relation of the children among themselves, that of brothers and sisters, with its manifold complications. Brother against brother, of which there are two cases in *As You Like It*; sister against sister, of which there is a triple case in *King Lear*, are instances, the number of which could easily be increased from the Shakespearian Drama.

Besides these four most direct and intimate relations of the Family, there are many others which are more remote, but which furnish the basis for collisions. Most peculiar is the situation of the illegitimate child, which Shakespeare has strikingly illustrated in three important characters. In such a case the Family becomes contradictory of itself, for the very institution whose function is to rear and protect the offspring of man disowns it, and even casts it out

of the social pale. To this more remote relation belong cousins, uncles, aunts, grandparents; let the reader supply the rest to the end of the line of kindred. Finally, consanguinity disappears entirely, though the domestic tie remains; this is seen in the step-mother and mother-in-law, with their cognate forms of both sexes—time-honored and much-employed sources of collision in the Family.

There is still another form of Love from which the domestic relation is wholly eliminated; both sex and blood sink down into indifferent elements. This Love is Friendship, which, in its turn, may conflict with all the preceding relations of the Family; for it is a unity of individuals in an emotion which disregards consanguinity as well as the difference of sex. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona* Shakespeare has portrayed the collision between Friendship and Love as the primordial impulse of the Family, wherein the latter is shown to be the more powerful and intense emotion.

The reader can now have a conception of the vast materials which domestic life furnishes to the dramatic author. Two or more of these collisions may be introduced into the same play, yet they ought to be nearly related in order to appeal strongly to the sense of artistic unity. Each phase may collide with any other phase; thus the number of combinations becomes almost infinite. Shakespeare has by no means exhausted them, notwithstanding his manifest tendency to avoid repetition, though he does sometimes repeat favorite themes. A further question arises concerning the gradation of these complicated collisions of the Family: Which is the higher element and which the lower? It is in some cases diffi-

cult to give a general rule ; external circumstances often play into the action and determine the solution. The wife should always place the husband before the parent, but much more questionable is the demand upon her to place the husband before the child ; such may or may not be her duty, according to circumstances. The universal principle, however, in this sphere is that what is truest and best for the Family must put down, in the end, every other domestic relation which may stand in the way, and Human Reason alone is to be the judge of last resort.

2. *The State.* — This institution is the great instrumentality for securing justice among men, for bringing home to every person the value of his deed. It thus rises above the limits of the Family. It has to disregard domestic ties in order to attain its object ; it cannot avoid punishing the father for his wrong action, though the wife and children must also suffer along with him. Justice is the supreme end, the pillar which supports the world. The Individual has to be rewarded with his own deed, though many tender relations be painfully torn asunder. That institution which secures justice to man must put aside all others that stand in its way. The State, therefore, in fulfilling the end of its existence, may collide with the entire realm of the Family in any single one, or in all, of its manifestations.

Such is the first collision of the State, the collision which presses itself most directly upon the mind in considering this subject. Moreover, these two institutions have their representatives in the two sexes. The State is essentially the ethical sphere of man ; the Family that of woman. This collision offers the greatest variety of dramatic treatment — it may be tragic, mediated, or purely comic ; in

fact, nearly every play of Shakespeare has something of it, from the slightest external tinge to the substantial germ of the action. In real life, duty to country and duty to family conflict not unfrequently, and the Individual has to solve the difficulty in one way or the other, happily or unhappily.

Second, the State has continually some form of internal collision which is manifested in the phenomenon of political parties. This, within proper limits, produces a healthy activity by preventing stagnation. But it may rise to the proportions of rebellion and revolution; then it is a conflict which demands a speedy solution. Which side should be successful is to be determined by the truth of its principle; at one time it may be the supporters, and at another time the assailants, of the established State.

Third, the external Collision of the State is war with another State. The ultimate principle here is nationality, which must be vindicated when impeded or assailed. A further development of these Collisions of the State may be deferred for the present; the reader will find a more detailed account of them in the Introduction to the Historical Drama. Shakespeare has devoted to them an entire cyclus of his finest plays—it is the cyclus of his Histories. In the total Shakespearian Drama, therefore, we behold a Drama of the Family and a Drama of the State; the great division of ethical institutions also divides his works. Here is the primal basis of their classification.

Two other ethical forces, which partake of the nature of institutions to a certain degree, may be mentioned, though they occur less frequently in Shakespeare. The first is Property—perhaps the lowest ethical principle, still an ethical principle. It cannot be violated without wrong,

and hence is capable of being made the basis of a dramatic collision. On the other hand, its exclusive pursuit brings its right into conflict with higher rights. It may assail, and even destroy, both the Individual and State, as is seen in the tragedy of *Timon*. Also, in *Merchant of Venice* there is a conflict between the right of Property and the existence of the Individual, which, however, is happily mediated by Portia. But the second ethical force above alluded to is the world-historical Spirit, which is a power above the State, destroying it, or calling it into existence, in accordance with the highest principle of History. Nations rise and fall; there must be something which controls these mighty changes. It is the supreme ethical authority, whose clearest indication is found in the two Roman plays which portray the transition from the Republic to the Empire, but it is really the deep, governing principle of the entire Historical Series.

There is still another organization existent in the world whose dramatic nature, at least, must be explained — the Church. The Church, however, is always a vanishing element in Shakespeare; its content, in so far as it is true and valid, is just the institutional and moral elements which are already potent in their own native forms. It is, hence, superfluous in a certain degree, or tending that way. Still, it is a powerfully organized system, with mighty instrumentalities; it, hence, may collide with the State, Family, or any other principle of the Ethical World. Its trained clergymen are continually appearing in a mediatorial, though not necessarily religious, function; its customs, ceremonies, and doctrines are often in the background, though rather as the external setting than as the vital principle of the play. Moreover, the Shakespearian

Church, in so far as there is any, is the Catholic Church, which is generally taken, even by Protestants, as the Poetical Church. But the Drama is not, and in its highest manifestations cannot be, religious; it is ethical. The conceptive forms of religion which exhibit man as determined externally must here be dropped, or plainly shown as the internal forces of the soul; the demon and the angel must be placed inside of the human breast. The Church, in the Shakespearian Drama, plays alongside of the Ethical World, having essentially the same principles, though in a different form, which form must, however, be employed for certain characters and for certain subordinate purposes.

Leaving out the Church, as superfluous in the main, the gradation of institutions will be in ascending order of importance, as follows: 1, Property; 2, Family; 3, State; 4, World-historical Spirit. It must not be forgotten that they, in and of themselves, are principles, ideas; they can be made a reality only through the medium of the Individual. He must be filled with their spirit; then he is their bearer, their representative. They thus become the deepest ground of character. But the Individual is free-will; he may reject all these institutional principles as guides of action, and follow his own notions of duty. Thus the man of conscience, upright and sincere, may fall into conflict with the whole realm of institutions, from the highest to the lowest. Here we enter a new sphere, the nature of which must be briefly considered—the second grand division of the Ethical World.

II. THE MORAL.—This is still the ethical realm, for there is still subordination to a higher behest, which is

now the internal law of duty. Here the Individual has, within himself, the absolute test of conduct; he asserts himself as supreme over all; he follows his idea of Right, against the realized forms of Right. Subjective conscience thus assails and destroys objective institutions. This is the mightiest contradiction of our own age, everywhere giving rise to the fiercest struggles, whose intensity is but faintly adumbrated in the pages of Shakespeare. Note the difficulty: The Individual, in destroying institutions, destroys the very reality of his substantial, permanent self; still, this self, this subjectivity, is the primitive germ from which are developed and vitalized all institutions, and hence is that which must be protected above everything else.

The moral stand-point is not strong in Shakespeare; he is decidedly institutional. He has portrayed no great, heroic, triumphant personage whose career is essentially moral, and who collided with the established system of an epoch and ultimately overthrew it by his thought and example, like Socrates or Christ. Brutus will not answer the requirement at all; both he and his principle failed; the Poet, indeed, furtively laughs at his claims. Cæsar, though a world-historical character, has not even a tinge of moral devotion. The sympathies of Shakespeare were decidedly conservative, institutional; indeed, they had to be so to make him a great dramatic poet.

The same fact can be most plainly seen in his treatment of the ordinary moral duties of life. The moment they come into conflict with any institutional demand they are universally set aside. Not that they are wantonly violated; if there is no collision with what the Poet deems a higher principle, then they are strictly observed. Verac-

ity is assuredly a requirement of the moral law, yet the falsehoods of Shakespeare's best characters have long astonished, and even scandalized, rigid moralists. Successful deception is one of his chief dramatic instrumentalities, when it can be employed to harmonize domestic or political difficulties. His clergymen, whom one naturally takes to be the very representatives of morality, are guilty of pious frauds in order to weld together the broken bonds of the Family. The mediator cannot be a severe formalist; he must soothe, compromise, yield; strife is not to be triumphant on account of moral scrupulosity. Also, the ground of Shakespeare's indelicate speech lies, not merely in the age, but quite as much in the man; the full flow of a sensuous poetical temperament was not to be curbed by restraints of propriety, or even of morality, when it was so faithful to the higher ethical element. In fact, the Poet's institutional sense relaxed—many readers have thought, too much—his moral sense.

A glance may be given to the interminable discussion upon this subject. A confusion of language has been both the cause and the effect of much confusion of thought, and the source of needless disputation. The word *moral* is usually made to do duty, not only for itself, but also for the words *ethical* and *institutional*. Both sides thus seem to prove their points—that Shakespeare is and is not a moral writer. A moral writer, in the restricted meaning of the term, he is not; but a moral writer, in the sense of standing on the basis of institutions, he is. Furthermore, it will be manifest how utterly inadequate for the comprehension of Shakespeare is the criticism which rests wholly in this limited moral view of his works, which moralizes them into pitiful lessons of

good behavior. Yet, such criticism not only abounds, but seems to be the prevailing method of considering his Ethical World.

III. THE NEGATIVE PHASE OF THE ETHICAL WORLD.—

We are now prepared to pass to a new sphere, which is also adequately represented in the Shakespearian Drama. Hitherto we have considered only the positive side of the Ethical World, and the collisions within it; but it has also a negative side, lying over against it, and hostile to it throughout. The Individual representing this negative spirit thus collides with both the moral and the institutional elements, and for him there can be no ethical justification. Two classes may be noticed, which shade into each other with many varieties: The indifferent bad person, who refuses, or is incapable of, all subordination, and follows appetite; and the active bad person, who seeks to destroy the entire Ethical World in both its forms. The former has its type, and even shape, in Caliban, the natural man, in whom there is the possibility, but not the reality, of a governing ethical principle. The latter finds its best representative in *Richard the Third*, the hero of negation, and hence necessarily tragic. Such is the true villain, the active agent of destruction to which he must, in the end, bring himself also. Yet, for him, too, there is mediation through repentance, as is seen in the case of Leontes, in *Winter's Tale*. Here, in their deepest principle, Shakespeare and Christianity are in accord, though their outward forms be so different. The one restores the villain—the man who has destroyed, as far as his deed goes, the whole Ethical World—bringing him back into harmony with it through contrite works; the other declares forgiveness for the most hardened sinner through repentance.

Such is the Shakespearian hierarchy of principles which lie beneath, and control, his Drama. Rational Subordination is its law, beginning with the natural element of man — appetite — and ascending through a scale of ethical powers, each of which commands what is beneath and obeys what is above. The Higher must subordinate the Lower; the final decision is rendered by the universal Reason, which alone can adequately judge of the Rational, the image of itself. This Reason is by no means the mere subjective judgment of the Individual, but Reason realized in the world, in the established forms of ethical government. Read the reality; it will tell the story, for it is only an expression of what is universal and rational in mankind.

The moral reader here is inclined to ask: Is not all this an advocacy of doing evil that good may come? The question naively takes for granted that there is no conflict of duties in human activity. If such were the case, then, indeed, life would be a problem of easy solution. The difficulty lies in the proper gradation; there never was a good which was not purchased by the sacrifice of some inferior good. The evil enters when the greater good is put aside for the lesser; to decide between them, however, is too often the perplexity and the pang of action. Also, this subordination of one principle to another — is it not the old Jesuitical maxim that the end justifies the means? Yes, so it is, with the necessary limitation. Indeed, how are any means to be justified unless through the end? or, rather, how can any means even exist unless through the end? The Shakespearian doctrine may be stated thus: If the end is a higher principle than the only possible means, then the means must be employed, and not to employ it is guilt; but, if the means is itself a

higher principle than the end to be attained, then it cannot be rightfully employed. The supposition is that there exists a conflict which cannot be avoided or otherwise mediated.

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It will, by many, be considered doubtful whether the Poet had consciously elaborated an ethical system as above set forth, and had formulated it in the abstract language of philosophy. Such a procedure on his part was not at all necessary for his poetical work; it was sufficient that he grasped, truly and completely, the practical world, and gave a picture of it in its essential features. This involves the ethical foundation which has just been unfolded; the active life of men is full of these collisions, and they form the abiding interest of History. An adequate representation of the world, just as it is, must include these ethical principles, for they make the world through their life-giving energy. Still, there are many indications that the Poet had also his abstract statement of these matters; who will doubt his ability to make it? Indeed, philosophers have always admired and quoted his concise and profound utterances of thought. A thinker he was, assuredly, who had brought into intellectual harmony

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SECTION IV.—ON CHARACTERIZATION.

I. ETHICAL ELEMENT OF CHARACTER.—We can now behold these abstract ideas passing into living reality through Dramatic Characterization, which originates directly from the Ethical World. One or more of its above-mentioned principles must take possession of the Individual, and become the mainspring of all his actions. Such is the deepest ground of character, which can only be adequately comprehended in its relation to the Ethical World. Accordingly, there may be pointed out three classes corresponding to its general divisions: The Institutional person, the Moral person, the Negative person, or villain. It is not necessary to repeat the manifold varieties of these forms—all the subdivisions previously given thus apply to character; State and Family, in their many com-

binations—in fine, all ethical powers furnish its impelling forces.

But there must also be more than one such person in a drama; otherwise, there can be no conflict. Two individuals are animated with opposing ethical principles, which both of them are seeking to realize; they grapple and struggle till one subordinates the other, or both perish or are reconciled—such is the Dramatic Colliding Character. In an accurate analysis of it, the first thing is to find its ethical essence, for this is the germ from which it unfolds in every direction. The individual, therefore, must be portrayed as the bearer of some principle whereby he comes into conflict with the bearer of some other principle.

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Here, however, a distinction should be carefully noted. There are many details which are very necessary for the poetical image, but not for the thought; such details may

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SECTION V.—STRUCTURE OF THE SHAKESPEARIAN DRAMA.

It is not enough that single characters be separately analyzed and described, for they, by themselves, are far from making a drama. They must be combined into groups, and these groups must be shown in their development. A Shakespearian character is usually portrayed in its growth; it unfolds gradually its secret possibilities in

connection with its surroundings. Also, the interest of a play depends upon the action to a large extent; the element of time cannot be excluded. A critical essay, therefore, should be something more than a character analysis; the synthesis of the Whole must be given at the same time; the organism and its growth are to be grasped together into a unity.

This is the most difficult part of Shakespearian criticism — a part in which there is no exaggeration in saying that it has hitherto wholly failed. Perhaps the demand is unreasonable, or, indeed, impossible. The requirement may be stated in the following form: Wanted, a critical method which will show dramatic structure and dramatic movement along with dramatic character. Can these two elements, which exist in every play, be transferred to an expository essay? The attempt must be made, though it be unsuccessful. The instrumentalities here employed are Threads and Movements.

I. THE DRAMATIC THREAD.—This may vary in its composition from a single person to one or more groups. Readers of Shakespeare have doubtless noticed the group, with its central figure, around which are gathered the subordinate characters. Sometimes these groups run separately through the play; oftener they intertwine with other groups. But the Thread seeks to combine according to the principle at issue. It collides or unites with other threads according to the exigencies of the action. The Thread, therefore, lays stress upon the thought; it may be the same as the group, or may be different sometimes; whereof the illustrations must be sought further on in the special treatment of the dramas.

The object of these Threads is to bring out into bold

relief the organization of the play. This should not be neglected in a critical development, which, therefore, must be made to move upon the Threads as the highways of the dramatic territory. They also contain the collision which may thus be unfolded on these lines. The number of Threads differ in the different dramas; their judicious management is one of the vital points of dramatic economy. Too many cause complexity and confusion; too few produce simplicity and bareness. Moreover, they should be interwoven to a certain degree in a drama, though carefully separated in a criticism; the one seeks to weld together the various elements, while the other must find the cleavages, however deftly united.

II. THE DRAMATIC MOVEMENT.—Each Thread moves forward to a culmination, and the totality moves forward to a culmination; then there is a transition to a new thought and a new order of things. All the Threads thus moving together through one phase of the action is called a Movement of the play, wherein there should always be some common principle of agreement or of conflict. Then follows a new phase, which is, or ought to be, logically evolved out of the preceding phase; this, too, is a Movement with its various Threads, each of which must be separately developed. The final Movement is the solution, which brings together all the Threads into harmony.

Long ago it was observed that a dramatic action has a beginning, middle, and end, but these distinctions, which apply to every object in creation, must be deepened into something essential. Moreover, the division into acts and scenes is chiefly made to satisfy the external requirements of the stage, which seldom corresponds to the inner development of the collision. The thought must be the

controlling principle of the work; and, as criticism proposes to give this thought, it must be governed by the same, and not by the requirements of theatrical representation. Hence nobody should expect that the logical movement will correspond to the division into acts and scenes in the modern editions of Shakespeare. Moreover, such a division is often wanting in the old copies, and did not at all originate with the Poet.

Manifestly, a critical method which neglects these Movements is imperfect. Only through them can the element of time be endowed with its true significance; and from time springs all development, as well as action. They exhibit the dramatic work in its inner vital activity, without the external expedients for theatrical representation — which is the poetical, but not the critical, form. The attempt is made through them to reach down to the pure movement of the thought without considering so fully the side of its manifestation. Upon this thought the different kinds of Drama are founded; hence these Movements will differ accordingly. / It will be sufficient to state here that Tragedy has essentially two Movements — Guilt and Retribution — while there are three in case of the Mediation of the Collision.

Threads and Movements, therefore, constitute the structural elements of the Drama. In an analysis we are first to carefully distinguish the various Threads of each Movement, and follow them through the play. Equally necessary is the synthesis; the principles of the Threads must be generalized into the principle of the Movement, and also the principles of all the Movements must be generalized into that of the play. Thus we get, as it were, into the workshop of the Poet; we behold him

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There has been essentially but one method of criticising Shakespeare's Dramatic Art since Schlegel, though in other respects the diversity has been great enough. This is, in the first place, to state as the idea of the play some abstract moral or psychological principle; then to take up the different characters, one after another, according to the caprice of the critic. Shakespearian essays have been mainly a series of descriptions of character, without any inherent connection—a gallery of portraits in accidental arrangement. All architectonic proportion, all development of the Individual, all movement of the Whole—in fine, everything peculiarly dramatic—must thus be left out. A true method would assuredly seek to include just these elements; to preserve the thought, not as a dead result, not an abstract *caput mortuum*, but in the living process of its artistic realization. Such a method must be found; if Threads and Movements are ineffectual, then search ought to be made for other instrumentalities.

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There has been essentially but one method of criticising Shakespeare's Dramatic Art since Schlegel, though in other respects the diversity has been great enough. This is, in the first place, to state as the idea of the play some abstract moral or psychological principle; then to take up the different characters, one after another, according to the caprice of the critic. Shakespearian essays have been mainly a series of descriptions of character, without any inherent connection—a gallery of portraits in accidental arrangement. All architectonic proportion, all development of the Individual, all movement of the Whole—in fine, everything peculiarly dramatic—must thus be left out. A true method would assuredly seek to include just these elements; to preserve the thought; not as a dead result, not an abstract *caput mortuum*, but in the living process of its artistic realization. Such a method must be found; if Threads and Movements are ineffectual, then search ought to be made for other instrumentalities.

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not only knew of it, but tried to conceal it when getting too manifest. The question, however answered, does not invalidate the fact that there is a method in his dramas.

In order to comprehend the Threads and the Movements in their manifold relations, the following diagram may be useful to some readers. Its object is to show the general form of Dramatic Structure, though different plays fill it out in a different manner. There may be a combination of parts here given, or a separation, or an entire omission, according to the requirements of the theme. Still, there must be an underlying frame-work which gives consistency and support to a drama, as the skeleton does to the human body.

I. MOVEMENT.	II. MOVEMENT.	III. MOVEMENT.
1. Thread. $\begin{cases} a. \text{ Group.} \\ b. \text{ Group.} \\ c. \text{ Group.} \end{cases}$	1. Thread. $\begin{cases} a. \text{ Group.} \\ b. \text{ Group.} \\ c. \text{ Group.} \end{cases}$	1. Thread. $\begin{cases} a. \text{ Group.} \\ b. \text{ Group.} \\ c. \text{ Group.} \end{cases}$
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The Movements divide the total action crosswise, the Threads divide it lengthwise; each Thread in each Movement is to be grasped separately at first, then in all its connections. Let it not be forgotten, however, that these divisions are made by Thought and for Thought, while the poetical work is an organism whose joints are, for the most part, carefully concealed by an overgrowth

of living tissue. The following essays have as one of their objects to exhibit prominently the dramatic frame-work; they seek out the structural form, and follow it strictly. Every play of Shakespeare may be mapped out according to some phase of this diagram; of course the Threads and the Movements may be more or less in number.

It is not pretended that any single play of Shakespeare has the exact completeness of this diagram; it is only a general form. The Movements will be indicated by Roman numerals (I, II, III); the Threads of the Movements by the Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3); the subdivisions of the Threads by letters (*a*, *b*, *c*). These designations are intended only as an humble aid to the mind; if, for some, they are too formal, let them be passed over without heed.

SECTION VI.—CLASSIFICATION.

We have now seen the construction of the single drama. But Shakespeare has many single dramas of very different kinds; these we must next behold in a system. The old classification into Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies is not so bad as some modern critics try to make out; many recent systems are much worse. It, at least, is based upon the inherent nature of the Drama, and not upon the time of origin, which is an accident. It seeks to classify by a principle, and not by a conjectural chronology. This old classification may be retained, and, with some slight modifications, be made to perform fully satisfactory service.

I. LEGENDARY AND HISTORICAL DRAMA.—The first improvement naturally sought for in it is a division which will correspond to the Histories. Tragedy and Comedy

stand in direct relation to each other, though not to *History*. Hence the word *Legendary* arises in the mind as the true antithesis to the word *Historical*. Such, therefore, will be the first grand division of the Shakespearian Drama: The *Legendary* and the *Historical*. Undoubtedly these two forms approach each other in certain cases, and begin to blend; but the distinction is a valid one, being grounded, not upon Time merely, but upon Thought.

The *Legendary Drama*, in general, employs collisions in the Family, with the State in the background; the *Historical Drama* employs collisions in the State, with the Family in the background. That is, the one is essentially domestic, the other essentially political. History gives an account of the life of the State, which thus furnishes a material, related by itself, to the *Historical Drama*. The *Legendary Drama* springs up before History—before the State has developed into a self-conscious existence, capable of carrying its own purposes and deeds. Hence in it the State is moved into the dim distance, and forms a kind of shadowy frame-work which holds, and often darkly suggests, the collisions of the Family.

The difference of content necessarily brings about a difference of form. The *Legendary Drama* has a tendency to be represented in a single play, for it is not limited to a single Time; indeed, it has a Time of its own. On the other hand, the *Historical Drama* is immovably fixed between a Past and an After, both of which loudly demand to be embodied in the dramatic account of an epoch. Hence there is a tendency to a consecutive chain of dramas, as the *Yugoslav and Lancastrian Tetralogies*, as the *Roman Historical* and the *English Historical Series*. No such tendency can be observed in the *legendary plays*; each is

a Whole in itself, rounded off to completeness in its own Time.

A further essential distinction lies in the manner of termination. Every single historical play has its action cut out of a recorded period, in which one party succeeds and one party fails. The end is, therefore, double — both happy and unhappy — as showing the triumph of the successful, and the death of the unsuccessful, hero. Such a drama, therefore, may be called both tragic and comic; it exhibits a combination of forms in a new form. Still further, these distinctions may be impressed upon the whole series, but not upon the plays separately; for instance, the Lancastrian Tetralogy terminates happily, and, hence, may be called a comedy in the large sense of the word; while the Yorkian Tetralogy terminates unhappily for the House of York, and, hence, may be called a tragedy. ✓

The Legendary and Historical fade into each other by insensible gradations, and there may be a difference of opinion concerning the boundary-line between them. The subject of *Troilus and Cressida* is fabulous, also that of *Coriolanus*, probably; but the leading theme of both these dramas is political, hence they resemble, fundamentally, an historical play. On the other hand, *Macbeth* is laid on a basis of history; still, its general form, and the manner of treatment, must classify it with the legendary dramas. On the whole, it may be said that Fable, untrammelled by Fact, Time, or Place, offers the freest and most flexible material for dramatic poetry, and that History has to seek a mythical element with which it must temper itself before it can be employed for the highest purposes of Art. ✓

II. CLASSIFICATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S LEGENDARY DRAMAS.—The first division here is into Tragedy and Comedy. Tragedy portrays the collision of opposing ethical ends, which cannot be mediated except through the death of the person or persons who are carrying out these ends. The tragic Individual is so completely absorbed in the realization of his purpose that the loss of his principle carries with it the loss of his life. Comedy, on the other hand, portrays the collision of opposing ethical ends, which can be mediated, and thus the participants do not perish. The Individual in this case must yield, in one way or another, through repentance, or inherent weakness, or absurdity. The word *Comedy*, it will be observed, is used here to include all dramas which terminate happily—that is, terminate with a reconciliation of the colliding elements, both persons and principles. There is, also, a narrower and more common use of this word, which will hereafter be more precisely designated.

The principle of the division into Tragedy and Comedy is, therefore, Mediation, which a little reflection will show to be one of the deepest elements of human spirit. Can man free himself from guilt, or must he perish? A character which persists in a conflict with a higher principle cannot be mediated, and, accordingly, is swept down by the hand of destiny. But the best thought of the modern world is salvation, which springs from the mediatorial power of spirit. Christianity delights in calling its exemplar of virtue and its type of truth the Mediator; herein it both expresses and inculcates the profoundest doctrine of humanity. In antiquity Fate ruled supreme, and Tragedy was in its highest bloom; but finally man

learned how to mediate himself, to master his own conflicts, and thus to attain Freedom. It is no wonder, therefore, that this Mediated Drama or Comedy constitutes the greater portion of the works of Shakespeare, the Poet of the modern world.

III. SECONDARY CLASSIFICATIONS.—Both Tragedy and Comedy are further divided into the real and ideal. These much-abused terms we shall try to explain, and to employ for a reasonable purpose. When Tragedy does not abandon the sphere of reality, in order to express and develop the motives of the Tragic Individual, it may be named real. On the contrary, when Tragedy seeks the realm of the Supernatural, in order to express and develop the motives of the Tragic Individual, it may be called, by way of contrast, ideal. In the former, subjective ends and mental conditions are clothed in their own language, appear in their own natural forms; while, in the latter, they assume a supernatural garb, which gives a peculiar character to the entire drama, as in *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*.

In Comedy, which is also named the Special or Mediated Drama, the essential point is the Mediation; this, also, is of two kinds, real and ideal. When the collision is mediated by the instrumentalities of the real world, this species of Drama may be called real. On the contrary, it may be called ideal when the collision is mediated through the introduction of an ideal world. Both indicate reconciliation, though by different means. The latter is, indeed, Shakespeare's most original literary form, and contains the highest products of his genius.

The table given on the following page exhibits the legendary dramas of Shakespeare, classified by their fundamental principle.

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		HISTORICAL. (See PART II.)	{ <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> — Mediated by Fairy World. <i>Tempest</i> — Mediated by Spirit World.

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PART I.

LEGENDARY DRAMA.

TRAGEDY.

THE NATURE OF TRAGEDY.

The Tragic in Art, according to the ordinary conception, is that which portrays an unhappy end. This is a necessary element in it; but we must go back and find out the cause of the fatal termination. The death of an innocent person by accident is not tragic in the true sense of the word. A tragedy is not produced merely by an indiscriminate slaughter of the characters at the end of the play. There must be something within the Individual which brings him to destruction; there must be a principle which fills his breast and drives him forward to his fate; his death is to spring from his deed. The elements of Tragedy may be reduced to three: The Tragic Individual, the Tragic Action, the Tragic Solution.

I. THE TRAGIC INDIVIDUAL. — He must be, in the first place, the bearer of some great end, into which he pours his whole being, and which he must carry into execution. These ends are, in general, the principles of the Ethical World, any one of which may take possession of him and make him its instrument. State and Family, in some of their manifold phases, usually constitute the essence of his endeavor, and furnish the deepest ground of his character. But he may, also, be the moral hero, or even the enemy of the whole Ethical World, the villain.

In the second place, the Tragic Individual grasps these principles with such a strength and obstinacy that he can be shaken from his hold only by death. Intensity is his great characteristic; his whole being is absorbed in his end, which constitutes the sole impelling source of his action. This unquestioning, often unconscious, devotion to an ethical purpose gives the simplest form of the tragic character. But scruples may arise and cause, for a time, deep struggles and hesitation; thus the character becomes complicated with different, and often opposing, ends. Still, the result is the same; the Tragic Individual must remain true to the ethical element of his nature, and he perishes rather than surrender or abandon his principle. Depth and intensity of purpose he has to possess to such a degree that he prefers death to the loss of his end. Hence, for him, there is no reconciliation.

In the third place, he has to maintain his conflict with another principle which is also seeking to give itself validity in the world through an individual. One character cannot make a tragedy; there must be opposition; and this opposition, to be of interest, must be of a permanent, and not of a capricious, nature. Hence it demands, on both sides, eternal principles for the tragic struggle, and not subjective oddities or delusions, which are comic. Then other persons become involved in the conflict—wherewith we have already passed into the next topic.

II. THE TRAGIC ACTION.—Here the elements to be considered are three: First are the *Threads*, which group the characters according to their essential relation, passing through the play lengthwise, so to speak, and making the lines of the action. Second are the *Movements*, of which there are in a tragedy properly two—guilt and retribu-

tion—though there may be more in number, and may require to be named otherwise. A fuller statement of the general nature of dramatic Threads and Movements is found in the Introduction. But the most important element of the Tragic Action is the Collision. In its simplest form it exhibits two individuals with opposing ethical ends, which they are seeking to realize; thus both fall into guilt in carrying out the highest principle of their natures. Each is in a sense right, and in a sense wrong—for each is trying to maintain what is right by destroying what is right; both sides may be valid in the Ethical World, yet both sides are in irreconcilable opposition; this gives the tragic contradiction, which is overcome only by the death of one or both contestants.

Such is the external conflict—man against man. But, at the same time, there may be an internal conflict going on in the breast of the Tragic Individual, who thus is rent asunder by two opposite, yet mighty, forces. He may be aware of the ethical nature of what he has to assail, he may give it full validity in his own conscience, and thus he may know that the fulfillment of his purpose leads to guilt. Hence, while carrying on a fierce struggle with another, he is in a fiercer struggle with himself; for in his own soul the cause of his opponent finds its most powerful supporter. The hostile principle, therefore, has a reflex in his conscience. His arm is paralyzed at the thought for a time; he may even hesitate, like Hamlet, till accident performs the work of retribution. But the true hero must, in the end, strike for his deepest principle; though he may know beforehand that he has to suffer, act he will, and meet, with an heroic heart, the consequences of his deed. In such a crisis alone is manhood

tested by an ordeal of fire, and the worth of human actions written in eternal blazonry. Thus the Tragic Collision is doubled, having an internal as well as an external phase. This form of it belongs to modern Tragedy, and particularly to Shakespeare.

III. THE TRAGIC SOLUTION. — The Ethical World is thus in a state of conflict and contradiction; its placid harmony has changed to wild discordant turmoil. But so it cannot endure; the struggle must be appeased in one way or an other, and peace be made among the warring principles. In Tragedy this can be accomplished only through the death of the Individual who has introduced strife into the Ethical World, and who refuses subordination to the Higher. The Tragic Solution springs from the Tragic Character, which lays the whole might of its being in its purpose. So great is its intensity and persistence that it cannot surrender its end; death alone solves the conflict, by removing the Individual.

The higher principle of the Ethical World must be shown triumphant at last; it must sweep out of existence the man who cannot be reconciled with its supremacy. This is Divine Justice, which sometimes looks so harsh and inexplicable in destroying a beautiful, noble, and even heroic, personage. He may have been guided by the purest motives; he may have maintained a high principle; but he assailed that which was higher, and, hence, must perish. But here this question springs up: How can we know what is the higher and what the lower principle? The ultimate test of all thought and of all action is universality, for this is the essential quality of Reason itself. Reason is the judge of last resort, whose decision is most plainly read in the institutions of man. This, therefore, is the insight:

The more universal the deed, the higher it must be placed in the scale of ethical grandeur.

With the death of the Tragic Individual peace returns — a peace bought with blood ; but it is the price which often has to be paid for the harmony of the Ethical World. Tragedy, therefore, ends in reconciliation, but a reconciliation through death ; a negative, violent end it is, but the most impressive in the whole range of the Drama. Tragedy writes in burning letters the decree of Fate : Man must be able to dwell in accord with the Ethical World or perish. For it, as the mirror of his own Reason, must exist, and exist without contradiction. But the question arises : Is it not possible to mediate the conflict and save the Individual ? Yes. At this point, however, we have passed out of the realm of Tragedy into the Mediated Drama.

I. GROUP.—TRAGEDIES.—(REAL.)

The essential element of the Tragic must, therefore, be traced back to a collision of the principles of the Ethical World. The classification of tragedies should accordingly follow the rank of these principles which are in conflict. Thus tragedies are systematized according to their deepest characteristic. The first in the list, therefore, will be *Timon of Athens*, which has the essence of its collision in Property, perhaps the lowest ethical principle. Then we ascend to the Tragedies of the Family, which is exhibited, in its various relations, in three great works. The first is *Romeo and Juliet*, the Tragedy of Lovers; the second is *Othello*, the Tragedy of Husband and Wife; the third is *King Lear*, the Tragedy of Parents and Children. We might now expect the State, as the next higher ethical principle, to furnish the basis for some tragic conflicts. Such is the case, but they are set in the frame-work of History, and, hence, must be relegated to the Historical Drama.

In the plays just mentioned the collisions are purely ethical, such as take place in real life. The characters are moved by no fantastic shapes, by no strange appearances; the natural form of ends, motives, and all subjective states is strictly maintained. This characteristic gives a peculiar coloring to these plays, which may be named the Real Group of Tragedies, in contradistinction to the Ideal Group, which will be considered hereafter.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

This play is one of the less celebrated and less attractive among Shakespeare's works. The theme itself is not the most enticing, and its treatment must be pronounced to be in many respects unsatisfactory. The inequality of the execution will be acknowledged by every careful reader. Some parts are wrought out with great skill and completeness; others are hastily and rudely sketched, while certain necessary links seem to be omitted altogether. The versification is often a mystery, and the prose frequently appears to be written with exceeding carelessness. But the main characteristic of the play is the dark coloring in which it portrays social life. Its speech is steeped in bitterness; it contains the most vindictive utterances against mankind to be found in Shakespeare. A noble, generous character is victimized to the last degree, and driven forward to suicide. Unselfishness becomes tragic in a selfish world. Still, the other side is not neglected. Timon is guilty, and has to take the consequence of his deed. He turns to the misanthrope, full of vehement sarcasm and red-hot imprecation. The latter part of the play, in particular, is a bath of gall.

To account for these peculiarities conjecture has been very busy, if not very satisfactory. But it is a wearisome and profitless task to chase down probabilities; let us at once pass to the more useful task of comprehending the drama. This is, as previously stated, defective in execu-

tion, but its conception is in every way Shakespearian. To unfold this conception in its completeness is our present object. The relation of the individual and of society to property and the conflicts which arise therefrom constitute the fundamental theme of the play. For property is also an ethical principle — not the highest by any means, perhaps the lowest, still an ethical principle — to violate which within its sphere is guilt, and not to subordinate which outside of its sphere is also guilt. A person, therefore, who disregards it utterly, and a person who esteems it as the highest end, may, both of them, become involved in a tragic destiny. These two forms occur in the present drama, whose general movement shows the course of the property-despising man, through prodigality to misanthropy and death; and of the property-loving society, through avarice to the loss of national independence.

Perhaps this idea of property may give some difficulty, and ought to be scanned a little further. Property is the beginning of an ethical order of things, and its necessary condition. In property, man first beholds and respects the right of his fellow-man, and has in turn his own right respected. Without property, person, in primitive times at least, had no true reality — was a slave, or a being without rights. It is the progress of the world's history which has secured right to person independent of property. But a man who ignores or denies the right of property, in a civilized society, must become unethical, and hostile to all institutions, if he carries out his doctrine to its consequences. Hence the Communist starts with assailing this primary principle, and ends with the destruction of all social order. But the other side, also, ought always to be taken into account. Property, though itself

an ethical principle, may come into collision with other and higher ethical principles. The unbridled pursuit of gain leads to the most fearful corruption, and can result in the destruction of the virtue, of the greatness, and, indeed, of the existence of a nation. The unlimited right of property, too, may beget and protect the direst wrong, oppression, and even slavery. It is just this conflict in the Ethical World which the Poet, true to his conception of Art, has made the basis of his drama.

Let us now unfold, in a brief statement, the structure of the work. There are two very distinct threads in which the action centers; they may be called the thread of Timon and the thread of Alcibiades. Both these persons are in a conflict with the society in which they live, as respects property; that society is devoted primarily to the acquisition of wealth, yet with a decided relish for gratification of the senses. Timon is the generous prodigal who spends his own and other people's money; Alcibiades is the active soldier who despises the pursuit of gain, and lives for a very different end. There are also two divisions or movements of the play. The first movement extends to the time when both Timon and Alcibiades take their departure from Athens on account of the above-mentioned conflict; a money-getting society drives them away. The second movement depicts the conduct of these two persons in exile. Timon becomes a misanthropist, turns against all mankind as a property-acquiring race, and finally perishes—it would seem by suicide. Alcibiades, the soldier and man of action, returns with an army, humiliates and punishes his country for its wrongs. Thereby it is also indicated that the

nation can no longer defend itself, but is sapped within by its exclusive pursuit of property.

I. 1. The first of these threads, that of Timon, is by far the more important and prominent. It exhibits in its development the most wonderful contrast, for it portrays the transition from a boundless benevolence to the deepest hatred of man, and from a life of luxury to a life of abject, but self-imposed, wretchedness. Its two factors are Timon and the society around him. This society is first drawn in the most lively colors; its various classes are all represented in the picture, with the same fundamental trait of character. The artists are here in the persons of the Painter and Poet, both of whom are ready to lay their offerings at the feet of Timon—for a consideration. Art is thus in pursuit of gain, and seeks it at the hands of patronage. But the Poet gives some honest counsel along with his flattery. He sings of the fickleness of Fortune, and warns Timon that all those who now seem to be friends will drop off at the first blow of adversity. His little poem, therefore, is a kind of programme, and foreshadows the course of the play. The commercial world has also its representatives present in the Merchant and Jeweler, the latter of whom, especially, has a sharp eye for business. He knows how to put his wares where they will bring several times their value. Presents of greyhounds, of milk-white steeds, pour in from thrifty lords who expect and receive a triple return for their gifts. Finally, Senators, the representatives of the State—and, hence, the most important personages of the time—lend their presence to this carnival of parasites. They also appear as the chief usurers and extortioners of an extortionate nation. The fundamental consciousness of

all these people is the same,—love of gain, pursuit of property, regardless of honesty or honor. Even the old Athenian seems to be a type of the ordinary citizen:

—“I am a man
That from my first have been inclined to thrift.”

He barter away the hand of his daughter to a servant of Timon for a sum of money which is given by the master.

Next to the desire of wealth comes the love of sensuous enjoyment, which is also furnished to these people by Timon. A number of idle lords and sycophants surround him for no other purpose than to share his bounty. Dinners are dispensed with unsparing liberality; masques, dances, music, make his house one continued scene of enchanting pleasures. “The five best senses acknowledge thee their patron,” says the disguised Cupid. It is a life immersed in the senses, without conscience or honor, and is the usual accompaniment of material pursuits. But Timon is soon to be disagreeably shaken out of his dream. Sunk in enjoyment, he has permitted his property, vast as it was, to melt into nothing, and with it he, too, must vanish from the scene.

But this society, so selfish and sensual, has naturally produced its opposite. Here is the example, Apemantus, the cynic. This character really belongs to history—to the days of the ancient Greek and Roman world, in its decline and corruption. We now behold an individual who, instead of gratifying the senses, abuses them, and thrusts from him all the reasonable comforts of life. To the flatterer succeeds the scoffer; to abject servility succeeds intentional discourtesy. The love of property has no place in his breast; on the contrary, he has become the

hater of men, from their pursuit of gain. He is just the person to expose the rotten condition of society, because he contemns it so deeply. His main function in the play is, therefore, to reflect the age in its negative phases. He holds up to Timon, for whom alone he seems to have some affection, the consequences of prodigality; he speaks openly and bitterly, exposing the flattery and treachery of the whole crowd of followers. But not alone to Timon, but also to all persons with whom he comes in contact, he tells with stinging satire what they are; he is the mirror which reflects the inner character of each individual of the company. Thus, amid all this hollow formality, the real spirit is shown; a man may utter his polite phrases, but Apemantus is there in his presence to cast his true image. Moreover, Apemantus is now the picture of that which Timon is destined to become, namely, the misanthrope. Still another trait must be added, which, however, appears with distinctness only in the latter part of the drama. It is the vein of 'affectation which lies deep in the character of Apemantus. His cynicism is largely the result of vanity, and not of conviction. Insincerity must thus attach to him in a certain degree, and he is a true member of this false and dissembling Athenian world.

Such is the society. Now we are prepared to consider the character of Timon, who is, for a time, its central figure. His fundamental trait is the lack of all notion of property. With this one element are connected his other qualities, good and bad. Generosity, strong affection, honesty, are some of his virtues; prodigality, love of flattery and pleasure, borrowing money, and running in debt are the most of his weaknesses. His principle is that his friends should share his wealth equally with himself; he tells them that

they are more welcome to his fortune than he is himself. A sort of communism is thus broached by him, and in his exceeding generosity he quite abjures the idea of property. To retain is not his nature; "there's none can truly say he gives if he receives." This principle is manifestly one-sided, and can only bring its followers to ruin. What is given out must come back in one way or another, else the source ceases to flow. But Timon will only give, and so hands over his entire fortune to the enjoyment of his friends. He becomes the victim of sharpers, who, with pretended affection, send him their presents knowing that they will receive something far more valuable in return. His property is, therefore, essentially abandoned; it may be compared to a dead organism which every creeping thing is busily consuming and carrying away.

Timon excites our admiration by his lofty enthusiasm, and by his noble striving after an ideal life in which all things are common and all men are brothers. But such a principle is an absurdity, an impossibility, for it rests upon a one-sided view of human nature. Man must be individual to be man; he cannot be absorbed into a universal humanity. Society also is based on the fact that each member of it seeks to own—that is, to acquire and to retain. One contributes his labor in order to get in return, and to keep as much as is reasonable. The consciousness of Timon is contrary to the organization of society, which cannot rest on spending alone, but also on obtaining. As everybody else is seeking to acquire and retain, Timon must soon be deprived of his property. It is at this point that we can see the ethical guilt of Timon; his principle and his conduct are logically destructive of society.

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The incidents may now be noticed in rapid succession. The money has run out; no more can be borrowed. The faithful steward is in the greatest embarrassment. The usurers have become alarmed for the safety of their loans; a crowd of importunate servants throng Timon's doors to collect their masters' debts. He now wakes up to the bitter situation; he has no land, no money, no credit, yet has incurred many obligations. But he is certain of his friends—they will be ready to advance him whatever sums he may need. Still, he learns on the spot of the refusal of the Senators to aid him, but he thinks that their blood is caked and cold with age; he will now apply to his warm-blooded and younger friends. Thus Timon has been compelled to abandon his principle of not receiving. He has hitherto disregarded property; now property makes itself felt. His ideal communistic dreams have vanished in his pressing emergency.

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The crowd of creditors becomes larger and noisier; Timon's door is besieged by them as by enemies. The very men who are most clamorous for their money are those who have enjoyed his bounty and shared his hospitality. They now demand pay for the gifts which they have in their own possession, and present the bill for the dinners which they have themselves eaten. The bitter conviction comes upon Timon that his whole life has been based upon a deception. Friends are not friends; all is false and hollow. Still, he by no means believes his principle to be incorrect — it is only too good for mankind; hence he will not abandon his principle, but will abandon mankind. He has learned the fact that the pursuit of the

individual in a social system must be, to a large extent, to gain and to own; property is the foundation. Timon, therefore, flies from society and goes to the forest. He will not dwell with his species in an organization so hostile to his conviction; he will henceforth live alone, and, because men are just the opposite of himself, he will become the man-hater; for it is man who has organized the system of property, and exists through its mediation. Such is the ground for the grand and striking transition of the drama, which portrays a human being passing from the warmest feelings of benevolence to the most intense hatred of his fellow-creatures. Once more he will invite his former friends to a feast. They come with fawning apologies and gluttonous anticipation; he is wholly confirmed in his bitter judgment. The dishes are uncovered—they are full of warm water. It is Timon's sole retaliation for their deception. In burning words he tells them their true character, and, involving in one common curse his guests, his country, and all humanity, he departs for the woods.

On looking back at the conduct of Timon, and of the society around him, it will be manifest that both have committed wrong in respect to property. Timon has disregarded it wholly as an ethical principle; the logical consequence of his actions would be social disruption. It is true that no law can prevent a man from squandering his substance, no more than it can prevent him from committing suicide; yet both acts are violations of right in its true sense. That Timon's wrong is mainly committed against himself cannot change its nature. But he also borrows and spends what belongs to others; hence his offense extends beyond himself. And, on the other hand,

it will be equally manifest that the society in which Timon lives is violating all ethical principle in its exclusive pursuit of wealth. It seems to acknowledge no other end of existence but to make money; through fraud and treachery it seeks to obtain what really belongs to another. Thus, besides its meanness and moral corruption, it also violates the right of property, though in just the opposite manner to that of Timon.

2. The second thread of the first movement is to be next considered, namely, that of Alcibiades. It also portrays the collision with this wealth-acquiring society, but in a new phase. Alcibiades is the man of action, and, hence, very different from Timon, who is essentially a theoretical enthusiast — though Timon is also represented as having been in the service of the State for a time. Such is the contrast between the two men; yet both are alike in their disregard of gain. Alcibiades we first meet at the house of Timon. He is a soldier, not rich, but he has certain decided notions of honor. Next he is seen before the Senate pleading for the life of a friend who has been condemned to death for killing an enemy. He urges the honorable nature of the conflict; his friend's and his own services to the country. The Senate, however, will not listen to such a plea, but adhere to the strictness of the law — for which conduct they cannot be blamed. But, on account of a hasty word, they are led to banish Alcibiades, the only man among them whose object was, not wealth, but the protection of the State. His sense of honor and his end in life the usurious Senate cannot appreciate. Reproaching them with their avarice, he departs from Athens vowing vengeance against the city. From the defender of his country he has become its enemy — a

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II. 1. We are now prepared to begin with the second movement—the conduct and fate of these two men in exile. Here, too, the thread of Timon is the more prominent. He curses society, institutions, mankind ; he prays that all the destructive elements of the world may be let loose upon the race. Not only does he flee from the face of humanity, but he tries to get rid of every social custom. Like Lear, he even casts away his clothing, as the last remnant which distinguishes him from the beast of the field. It is the complete abandonment of his species, and return to animality ; he disdains himself on account of his human shape ; he will not eat human food, but digs in the earth for roots to sustain life. But what is here ? As he turns up the ground he finds a heap of gold. This is what he had

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Not only property, but also society, will appear at the new abode of Timon in the forest ; the world will be brought into the presence of the misanthrope, judged, and damned. In order, however, to effect its destruction, its own negative elements are introduced and sent on their pitiless errand. First come Alcibiades and the two prostitutes ; the one is the assailant of the State and the ethical institutions of man, the others are the destroying angels of the physical being of man. These two agencies, if let loose upon society without restraint, seem quite sufficient to sweep it from the face of the earth. Timon at first curses them because they belong to the human race ; though Alcibiades is his friend, friendship now only arouses in him the most bitter and vehement sarcasms. But, when he learns that their expedition is directed against his native city, he wishes them complete success in their destructive career, and contributes a portion of his gold for the accomplishment of their purpose. Bandits come to rob him ; he thanks them for their profession because it is the enemy of property ; he gives them gold also, and sends them to Athens to assail the wealth whose principle has been his own ruin.

Other figures who belonged to the old company appear, of which the most interesting is Apemantus ; he seeks out Timon in the forest. Here a new trait of his distinctly appears. He is jealous of Timon's misanthropy ; he wishes

hater of men, from their pursuit of gain. He is just the person to expose the rotten condition of society, because he contemns it so deeply. His main function in the play is, therefore, to reflect the age in its negative phases. He holds up to Timon, for whom alone he seems to have some affection, the consequences of prodigality; he speaks openly and bitterly, exposing the flattery and treachery of the whole crowd of followers. But not alone to Timon, but also to all persons with whom he comes in contact, he tells with stinging satire what they are; he is the mirror which reflects the inner character of each individual of the company. Thus, amid all this hollow formality, the real spirit is shown; a man may utter his polite phrases, but Apemantus is there in his presence to cast his true image. Moreover, Apemantus is now the picture of that which Timon is destined to become, namely, the misanthrope. Still another trait must be added, which, however, appears with distinctness only in the latter part of the drama. It is the vein of 'affectation which lies deep in the character of Apemantus. His cynicism is largely the result of vanity, and not of conviction. Insincerity must thus attach to him in a certain degree, and he is a true member of this false and dissembling Athenian world.

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II. 1. We are now prepared to begin with the second movement—the conduct and fate of these two men in exile. Here, too, the thread of Timon is the more prominent. He curses society, institutions, mankind; he prays that all the destructive elements of the world may be let loose upon the race. Not only does he flee from the face of humanity, but he tries to get rid of every social custom. Like Lear, he even casts away his clothing, as the last remnant which distinguishes him from the beast of the field. It is the complete abandonment of his species, and return to animality; he disdains himself on account of his human shape; he will not eat human food, but digs in the earth for roots to sustain life. But what is here? As he turns up the ground he finds a heap of gold. This is what he had

fled ; for it is the image and representative of all property. The old cause of his misfortune and transformation cannot be left behind ; it extends its influence even to the woods. But now he will keep it, and make a new use of it ; he will employ it as a destructive weapon against humanity.

Not only property, but also society, will appear at the new abode of Timon in the forest ; the world will be brought into the presence of the misanthrope, judged, and damned. In order, however, to effect its destruction, its own negative elements are introduced and sent on their pitiless errand. First come Alcibiades and the two prostitutes ; the one is the assailant of the State and the ethical institutions of man, the others are the destroying angels of the physical being of man. These two agencies, if let loose upon society without restraint, seem quite sufficient to sweep it from the face of the earth. Timon at first curses them because they belong to the human race ; though Alcibiades is his friend, friendship now only arouses in him the most bitter and vehement sarcasms. But, when he learns that their expedition is directed against his native city, he wishes them complete success in their destructive career, and contributes a portion of his gold for the accomplishment of their purpose. Bandits come to rob him ; he thanks them for their profession because it is the enemy of property ; he gives them gold also, and sends them to Athens to assail the wealth whose principle has been his own ruin.

Other figures who belonged to the old company appear, of which the most interesting is Apemantus ; he seeks out Timon in the forest. Here a new trait of his distinctly appears. He is jealous of Timon's misanthropy ; he wishes

to monopolize for himself the hate against mankind, and the fame thereof. We are now certain that the cynicism of Apemantus is at bottom an affectation, and not a conviction; it is a capricious whim, or, at most, a theoretical hobby. He can have no valid ground for it; he has not felt the loss of fortune or the treachery of friends, for he never had either fortune or friends. But Timon's conduct rests upon his deepest conviction and his actual experience; his sincerity will carry him to the logical consequence of his principles, though the result be death. Apemantus, were he consistent and honest, would long since have fled to the woods, and not have continued to lurk around the abodes of the great. It is the difference between the sincere and affected misanthrope. Timon, therefore, will have nothing to do with him, and drives him back, we may suppose, to society.

The Poet and Painter again come before us, though now portrayed in grosser colors than before. The Poet, at least, could have been charged only with flattery in his previous utterances; now he is also guilty of wanton falsehood. The servants, however, still remain true to the memory of Timon. Flavius, the good steward, hunts him up in his solitude, in order to take care of him. Thus Timon is brought to acknowledge that there is one honest man — one of the human race whom he cannot hate. Still, he will not tolerate any upright shape. Flavius, too, is driven off under the threat of curses. Finally, the Senators of his native city are brought to his cave. They make the humblest apologies and offer the greatest rewards; they are even ready to grant him absolute power if he will return and drive back Alcibiades. No, he will not stir; on the contrary, he gives the State over to destruc-

tion. It ought to be observed that Timon is here represented as a soldier able to cope with the experienced Alcibiades; a new trait, which does not well consist with his previous character.

Society has now passed in review before Timon as misanthrope; it is only fit to perish. He has reached the true conclusion of his doctrine: Whoever desires to rid himself of affliction, let him hang himself to a tree; the human species is a nuisance — it ought to have sense enough to abolish itself. The ultimate application of his principle to himself he does not disguise; if mankind ought to perish, he must be included. Timon is honest and consistent; hence he kills himself. Such is the logical outcome of Pessimism—it must destroy its supporter. Were Apemantus sincere in his expressed beliefs, he ought to meet with the same fate. The tragic destiny of Timon, therefore, springs directly from his conviction; we find its germ in the very beginning of his career, in his views concerning property and society. In other plays Shakespeare has introduced a flight to the woods as the means of mediating the conflict and restoring the individual to society. But for Timon there can be no restoration; he has utterly lost his reconciling principle.

2. The second of the two exiles, Alcibiades, has already been noticed in his interview with Timon. He marches against Athens, the city sues for peace, but its humiliation is accomplished. It is punished for its wrongs; the exclusive devotion to property has brought about national subjugation. Thus it is manifest that this second thread was introduced as the poetical means to visit retribution upon society for its offenses. Alcibiades reserves the enemies of Timon and of himself for death;

the rest of the citizens are allowed to survive the loss of independence. Both Timon and society have now paid the penalty for their ethical violation, though the wrong of Alcibiades against the State is left without explanation or punishment. This second thread, throughout the entire drama, is in a very incomplete condition, but its general purpose is manifest from the conclusion.

In fact the play, as a whole, leaves the impression of a sketch completely filled out in some portions, in other portions possessing the barest outlines of the characters and action. Motives are inserted which are not afterwards used, some are omitted which ought to have been mentioned; both redundancy and deficiency are easy to be pointed out. Several unexpected differences between the first and second parts occur in the characterization; these have been noticed in the case of the Poet, of Ape-mantus, and of Timon also. The work, therefore, seems to lack the final revision which gives to every element its proper relief, and organizes the whole into a consistent unity. The reason of this incompleteness has often been conjectured, but never can be known. Still, the conception of the play is eminently worthy of the great Dramatist, but it remains a grand fragment of his genius, which, had it been completed, would have taken an equal rank alongside of *Lear*, whose coloring and treatment it often resembles.

Finally, a few of the conjectures may be mentioned which have sought to account for the peculiarities of the play. Some critics have supposed that it was originally one of the Poet's most perfect works, but was ruined by the various mutilations of the actors, or, possibly, of the printers, or of the copyists. Another supposition is that

it was based upon an older drama by a different author, which was partially remodeled by Shakespeare. Again, an opinion has been advanced that the Poet lost, to a large extent, his Art in one period of his career, and that *Timon* is a work of that period. It has also been held to be an imperfect second edition of a youthful product of Shakespeare. All these conjectures are confessedly without any historical basis, and merely seek to imagine some external ground for the incomplete character of the drama; as far as its comprehension is concerned they furnish no aid, and, hence, may be passed by without further discussion. There is, however, a very popular theory which attempts to account for the selection of this subject by the Poet. It is supposed that Shakespeare, from some unknown cause, became disgusted with society and men, and gave expression to his misanthropic feelings in the present work, and, to a less degree, in some other works. But nothing can be more unwarrantable than to infer that the expression of any of his characters are the real opinions of the man Shakespeare. He undoubtedly comprehended Timon, but it is hard to believe that he was Timon, even for a short period. In fact, the tragic fate of the latter rather goes to show that the Poet wished to give a warning against the danger of misanthropy, instead of being a misanthrope himself. The universality of his genius precludes the possibility of limiting him to any one character.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

This play shows in many ways that it belongs to the youthful productions of Shakespeare. Its theme is the passion of youth; it has the wild freedom and intensity of youth. There is a lack of that severity of treatment which belongs to the later works of the Poet. There are important parts which are dismissed with an undue brevity and bareness of statement, and then again there are other parts developed at length which appear quite unnecessary to the action; there is often a sensuous fullness of delineation, and often an abstract meagerness; there are found the finest and purest bursts of poetry intermingled with frigid conceits and far-fetched antitheses. Everywhere in the drama can be noticed an inequality—an inequality in thought, in language, in the structure of the plot. Still, beneath all this play of caprice and irregularity there is felt to be a deep, pervading harmony throughout the entire work. The inequality seems to be the inequality of the subject—the inequality of youth, with its fitful, tempestuous passion. It has been well named the tragedy of love—love in all its conflicts, love in all its extravagance and volcanic tossings, love despised, and love triumphant. It portrays this passion boiling over with a fervor which sweeps down all traditional barriers—even the most deadly enmity—and which advances firmly to a struggle with death itself. The theme is, therefore, love unconquerable by fate, whereof the individual is the merest instrument,

ready to be sacrificed without the least hesitation. Such is the feeling which warms this poem in every part; youthful love in its most glowing intensity—for it is just the intensity which characterizes the love of Romeo and Juliet above all other loves, and which prefers death to permanent separation.

It will now be our object to point out the harmonious structure which underlies the drama and gives it a general consistency of thought, but above all imparts to it that profound concord so readily felt but not always so easily explained. Whether the Poet had in mind, when he wrote the play, just the method here unfolded, or was wholly unconscious in his procedure, is a question which cannot now be discussed; but, whatever answer be given, it cannot affect the validity or the necessity of the explanation. Shakespeare is, at least, a phenomenon whose law is the subject of rational investigation, just as the phenomena of Nature must be explained and reduced to laws, whether Nature be conscious of her own laws or not.

Taking the play as it stands, there are three essential divisions of its action, three grand movements which combine to form the whole. The first culminates in the union of Romeo and Juliet, and portrays the obstacles and events antecedent to that union; it exhibits the transition from the unrequited to the requited love of the hero, culminating in marriage. The second unfolds the separation of the lovers, caused by the banishment of Romeo, with the conflicts resulting therefrom, and ends in their death at the tomb of the Capulets; it depicts the attempts at reunion of the unhappy pair, which, however, do not succeed, but bring upon them destruction. The third and shortest movement is the reconciliation of the two hostile

houses of Montague and Capulet, after their children have perished. The peculiar relation in which this last movement stands to the rest of the play, and to Tragedy in general, will be considered in the latter part of the essay.

Such are the general divisions of the entire work; but through the whole action there run a certain number of threads, which must be carefully distinguished. One of these threads is the Prince with his attendants, representing the State, which stands above all the conflicting elements and enforces their obedience to its commands. Its efforts are directed to keeping peace between the two hostile families, to securing, by its power, an external harmony and order; still, the enmity is so intense that upon slight provocation it boils over, and bears down all authority. This thread is the least prominent one in the play; the Prince appears but three times, and each time to quell a disturbance. It will not, therefore, be separately developed, but will be indicated in connection with the other two threads with which it is closely united. The first thread, therefore, is the two houses, the Montagues and Capulets, with their respective adherents, both of which have one common trait—mutual hatred. The hostility between them is so deep-seated that it not only assails the higher authority of the State, as above mentioned, but also the Family, in such a manner that through this hate the Family turns against itself and assails its own existence, and, indeed, finally destroys itself in its children. Thus there is portrayed a double collision—the Family against itself and against the State. This thread is the disturbing principle of the play; it disturbs both public order and domestic peace. The second thread, however, is the most important one of the play—is, in fact, the

play itself. It turns, not upon family hatred, but upon the opposite passion — love — which constitutes the basis of the Family. Its bearers are Romeo and Juliet, a Montague and a Capulet, whose union thus falls athwart the enmity of their houses, and is sought in vain to be reconciled with the same by Friar Laurence, the great mediator of the drama. Both, too, are brought into conflict with the suitor Paris, who is favored by the parents. Love thus is the source of manifold collisions, which the Poet has taken the pains to fully portray. First comes the unrequited love of Romeo, in which the conflict is wholly subjective; in which the individual is struggling with his own passion. Then follows his requited love, which, however, has to endure a double collision from an external source — with the will of the parents of Juliet on the one hand, and with the suit of his rival, Paris, on the other. With this naked statement of the elements of the play, which is intended only as a sort of analytical table of contents to aid the reader in grasping the whole, we shall now proceed to a concrete development of the thought of the drama.

I. 1. The first movement begins with a tumult between the Montagues and Capulets, and its suppression by the State. The very first scene thus depicts the extent and the intensity of the hatred between the two houses; it reaches down to their servants, who are ready for a fight whenever they meet, and involves the relatives of both families, together with their respective adherents in the city. Order is trampled under foot, a violent struggle ensues in the streets, till the Prince, as the head of the State, has to appear for the purpose of vindicating authority and restoring peace. We are also told that

these brawls have repeatedly taken place. Thus it is shown that the conflict between the hostile families is so violent and wide-spread that it assails the State and threatens the existence of public security. Such is the background upon which the chief action of the play is to be portrayed.

2. (*a.*) In this world of strife and contradiction Romeo now appears, manifesting the full intensity of love. He shuns society, seeks the covert of the wood, avoids daylight, desires not even to be seen. His passion is so strong that he cannot control himself; he sighs and weeps; he goes out of the way of everybody, in order not to expose his state of mind and to give full vent to his fancy and emotions. His absorption is complete; he is so swallowed up in one individual of the opposite sex that he cuts himself off from all other relations of life — from father, mother, relatives, and friends. Thus the intensity of his love is the key-note of his character, and it is this intensity which will bring forth all the tragic consequences of the drama.

But his love is unrequited; he loves, and is not loved in return. Here we reach the cause of his strange demeanor and the source of all his affliction. Thus there has arisen a struggle within his own bosom which he cannot allay. He gives expression to his conflicting emotions in language so strongly antithetic and contradictory that it often seems unnatural and frigid, yet it is only a highly-wrought picture of his own internal condition. His utterances are the very embodiment of contradiction:

“Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!”

Such extravagance belongs to youth and love, though

it perhaps begins to get outside of the domain of the Beautiful. Romeo's mind is in a state of contradiction; his language is in the same state. The sympathetic Benvolio tries to soothe him, and advises him to change, to examine other beauties. But the passionate lover scouts at the suggestion; he cannot be taught to forget. We should take note of this declaration, for it is sometimes asserted by critics that his first love was not genuine. The collision, so far, is purely subjective — in the breast of the individual; but, to produce a dramatic action, there must be a struggle with an external power, which the poet now prepares to introduce.

Hence we must pass to the love which is requited, and thus brings him into collision with the hostile family. Romeo, in company with his friends, among whom is the gay scoffer, Mercutio, goes to a masquerade at the dwelling of Capulet, the mortal enemy of his house, evidently for the purpose of beholding the fair Rosaline. While there, he sees Juliet, and at once transfers to her all his passion. Indeed, its intensity is so great that he for the moment questions his former affection. This passage has been often construed as if Shakespeare meant to assert that Romeo's first love was only a fanciful delusion. How utterly aimless, how ridiculous, must this whole first act then become! For we would seek in vain to find its object. The Poet, if such were his meaning, would be simply denying his own work. These words of Romeo, however, are only the exaggerated expression of his present impulse. He passes to Juliet and talks with her; the language between them, though full of dark and far-fetched metaphor, is plain enough when supplemented with the look and the kiss. If he could not endure the pre-

vious struggle, what must become of him now? Juliet is also caught; her fervor seems equally great. Both have loved at first sight. Through all this volcanic might of passion the tragic end is peering, for separation now means death.

Thus Romeo *has* changed, notwithstanding his protestations to Benvolio. This transition is the central point of the ~~whole~~ first movement of the play, and, indeed, gives the true motive for the tragic termination of the action. But it has been so generally misunderstood, according to our judgment of the drama, that the grounds for it require a full statement. It is declared that this sudden change from one individual to another is unnatural, and is, moreover, a great blemish in the work. The apparent lack of fidelity is said to give offense to our ethical feelings, and to destroy our respect for the hero. Also, Romeo seems now the most inconstant of lovers, but afterwards is faithful to death — which fact looks like an inconsistency in the character, and an unsolved contradiction in the play. The defenders of the Poet have injured him more deeply than his assailants; they have defended his work by destroying it. The first love of Romeo, so fully detailed by the author, is pronounced to be no love — a mere caprice. But a careful view of the circumstances will show that this change is, not only psychologically justifiable, but is the only adequate motive for the death of the lovers — that is, for the tragedy itself.

Romeo is consumed with the most ardent passion; its intensity is its great characteristic. He has given himself away, has made a complete sacrifice of his individuality, but there is no return for his devotion. This is the motive upon which the Poet has laid the chief stress; the first

love of Romeo was not reciprocated. The necessity of a corresponding passion is felt by everybody, though its logical basis is not usually thought of. Love is the surrender of the individual to one of the opposite sex, through the feelings. Each must find his or her emotional existence in the loved person ; each must be only through the other. This mutual sacrifice of self on the part of both constitutes the unity and harmony of love. For, when individuality thus offers itself upon the altar of affection, that same individuality, to be consistent with its own principle, must demand a like sacrifice from the second person ; otherwise, it is in utter contradiction with itself. A new individual must enter the bosom and take the place of that self which has been immolated.

But, let one side be wanting, the reciprocity is destroyed ; there is the sacrifice without the compensation. The lover loses, for a time at least, his own individuality, as far as his emotion is concerned, without gaining another. Hence he is harrassed with an internal struggle, more or less severe according to the intensity of the passion. As to the quantity of the literature of the world which is based upon unrequited love the reader can form his own estimate ; but it may be said to be the first, most natural, and most prevalent of all the collisions which spring from the tender passion. In such a struggle a restoration may be, and usually is, brought about by the healing influence of time. But the sacrifice may be so complete, and the passion so intense, that recovery is extremely difficult by this means — nay, impossible. Then there is only one other way — change the object ; find some new individual who will make the sacrifice. It is a matter of not uncommon experience that rejected lovers resort to these sudden trans-

less of affection: not from spite, however, as is often supposed, but from a real necessity.

Such is the conflict in Romeo's bosom, and such is his *condition*. The fervor of his love does not permit him to *recover* himself: he, indeed, must change in order to get *regain* and harmonize the struggle. It is, therefore, not *folly*, but rather the permanence and strength of his passion, which causes its transference from Rosaline to Juliet. This change is, hence, grounded in the fact that his love is unrequited, and yet so intense that it must have an object — a corresponding sacrifice. He cannot retrace his steps. He is just seeking that which comes across his way in the form of Juliet, for Rosaline cannot now have any reality for him. The relief is instantaneous—he recovers himself at a bound. The merry mocker, Mercutio, cannot now drive him off by bitter jests, but is beaten at his own game, and compelled to exclaim: "Now art thou sociable: now art thou Romeo!" etc.

For Juliet, the motives are quite different; she has no case of unrequited affection on her hands. Hence the question may be asked, why then does she, too, so easily fall in love? Juliet is in the full bloom of youth—ready for the sacrifice, yet without its experience. Now, Romeo approaches her in the hot glow of his love, and, with his sly words and eyes darting flames from beneath his mask, he infuses into her soul all the strength of his passion. Nor is this anything unusual or unnatural, for man and woman belong together, and must come together unless there is a good reason for their remaining asunder. No such reason exists in the case of Juliet; she is taken by the first manifestation of love. Romeo gives a hint: "They (my lips) pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair;"

she requites; a kiss seals their union. Thus her love is motived by that of Romeo, and the intensity and completeness of his sacrifice call for and demand an equal intensity and completeness in her devotion. Her possible tragic destiny also peers through at this point; the fate of her lover must be hers.

The intensity now reached by Romeo and Juliet is kept up by both throughout the play, and constitutes its great distinguishing feature; for the love of man and woman has here attained such a potency that neither can exist without the other. In the vast majority of mankind it never reaches quite so high a degree; it stops this side of death. And, indeed, it should never reach quite so high a degree, for thus it turns to guilt and prepares the tragic fate. Romeo and Juliet are devoted to one another as individuals, and not so much to the Family as an institution. Their love thus turns to an ethical violation, since it renders domestic life impossible if the one chance be lost. The rational object of marriage is for man to exist in the Family, which, if it cannot be reached through one person, must be sought through another. The Institution is higher than the Individual; but, in the present drama, the love of an individual assails the Family on its universal side; thus there must result a tragic termination. For, truly considered, love, which is the emotional ground of the Family, is here destroying the Family itself. Love thus annihilates its own object, puts an end to itself; so do Romeo and Juliet, its bearers.

The first act concludes with the excitation of their mutual love. The next step is the mutual acknowledgment, so that their union rises out of mere emotion into conscious purpose. This declaration to each other gives

the famous balcony scene, one of those everlasting reprints of the human heart. The theme is the sacrifice of the sexual individual, which results in the formation of a higher unity, the Family. Previously this unity was only felt; now both declare it to be their most exalted principle forever. The activities of the mind, particularly the imagination which makes symbols, and the understanding which grasps relations, are intensified into a whirlwind of energy by their passion. In the scenes of their meeting, all external nature around them is seized upon and made the bearer of their emotions; sun, moon, stars, birds, the lark and nightingale, are turned into the ministers of their love. The play of mental activity is as great as that of passion, and relieves the directness and blunt expression of mere sentiment. The conceits, however, and the images are not always in good taste, though they are, in general, psychologically true; the characterization cannot do without them, for they exhibit the strength of the emotion of the lovers. Their intense feeling seeks the world to find means for utterance; their minds hunt up the most recondite relations between objects; all externality seems there only to express love. The hatred of their families is burnt up in a consuming fire; both are ready to disown their own names if these furnish any obstacle to their union. Still, they feel that a new and terrible conflict has arisen which they now have to face — a conflict with the ancient prejudice and hostility of their families.

But their union is not yet complete; it must be carried out to its full realization in marriage. This the deep and earnest nature of Juliet has already demanded:

“ If that thy bent of love be honorable,
Thy purpose marriage.”

It is no holiday flirtation, but her ethical feeling is even stronger than her love, since, rather than violate it, she is ready to undergo the pain of separation. She even distrusts her strong emotion; it is too rash, too sudden; she wants time to give it permanence. This ethical element in the character of Juliet is generally not attended to. She is considered, on the one hand, as a simple, unreflecting girl; on the other hand, she is sometimes represented with a dash of coquetry. Both these views are mistaken. She here first insists upon due deliberation, and then seeks the true ethical union found only in marriage. For in marriage the Family is first realized, since to the emotional or subjective element of love there is thus added the objective or rational element of an institution. This consummation could be reached, according to the belief of the time, only through religion, which gave the divine sanction to the union already formed in the emotions. Thus the Family was called into existence, as it were, by the fiat of God; it was a new and holy creation in the world, which was under His special blessing and protection. The ceremony is, therefore, performed by a priest of the church. Their unity is now a reality.

The marriage of the lovers introduces us to the grand mediator of the play, Friar Laurence. We are ushered into his presence in the quiet of early morn. The holy man of contemplation is shown in all the surroundings; the very atmosphere breathes serenity and repose. His reflection leads him to consider the contradictions of nature and of mind; he notes that excess calls forth strife; virtue itself, being strained, turns to its opposite. Here is given the germ of his character. He recognizes the source of all conflict, and seeks the means of its recon-

ciliation. He naturally employs the religious form of expressing this contradiction — grace on the one hand, rude will on the other. He has himself subordinated all the passions of the soul ; his order indicates his exclusion from secular struggles ; he stands in striking contrast to the passion-tossed world around him. In southern climates, where the blood is hot, it is the main duty of the confessor to assuage the harrassing emotions of the individual who cannot control them himself, and, hence, must have them controlled from without. The Friar is the mediator of the whole community. The very intensity of their passions demands one who is without passion to direct, advise, and soothe. Romeo, we see, has been a frequent visitor ; the Friar was his confidant when no one else was, and has already often calmed his excited feelings concerning Rosaline. Such is the beautiful character of the Friar, standing in the midst of this tempest of passion, controlling, directing, pacifying it ; for both love and hate seem equally ungovernable and destructive without his reconciling presence. He is represented as a profound observer of the natural properties of objects ; hence he can provide a drug of such wonderful potency for Juliet. But his chief mental principle is the shunning of all extremes ; and just here lies the basis of his deceptions, of the pious frauds which he practices. A rigid moralist he is not, and cannot be in consistency with his principle,

“Virtue itself turns to vice, being misapplied.”

As mediator, he has to smooth over difficulties and harmonize collisions ; he cannot be hampered by moral punctilios at every step. He brushes them away ; but still he is true to the highest end, and subordinates to it

every minor scruple. It is to be noticed that all of Shakespeare's mediatorial characters have quite the same traits; they falsify and deceive, without the least hesitation, in order to accomplish their important mediations. The Friar unites Romeo and Juliet in marriage, for this is the only solution; separation means death; religion adds its sanction to love, to the right of subjectivity, even against the consent of the parents; and the new family unites within itself the heirs of both the Capulets and the Montagues, whose ancient hatred must henceforth vanish in their descendants. Such a consummation is assuredly a great religious object.

(b.) It is now time to go back and bring up to this point the counter-movement to the marriage, resulting from the wooing of Paris. He is the competitor of Romeo for the hand of Juliet; but he rests his suit, not on the love of the daughter, but on the consent of the parent, and herein proceeds according to the received social formality. Just the opposite is Romeo, who entirely disregards formality, but acts from love. Hence arises the conflict. Both parents of Juliet favor Paris, but the father at first declares distinctly that the consent of the daughter must be obtained; afterwards he abandons this principle, and tries to force the marriage with Paris — an act which brings on all the tragic consequences of the drama. The strength of each suitor was shown at the masquerade. Love proved to be more powerful than form; hence Paris had his chosen one carried off from under his very eyes.

This excellent young man, upon whom certainly the Poet nowhere casts any reproach, has been often misjudged by critics. He is not a villain, not a fortune

hunter, unworthy of Juliet ; the only drawback is, he does not possess her heart. On the contrary, he is a truly ethical character. His manner of courtship was certainly the established custom of the time. His conduct and final death at the tomb of Juliet show that he was influenced by love. He was not, therefore, seeking a marriage from interest. The pith of his contrast with Romeo is that, although he is a worthy man, he has not, and cannot have, Juliet's affection, which fact, however, is nowhere made known to him in the play. His love is unrequited, like the first love of Romeo ; hence it cannot form a rational basis for marriage. Such is the collision of the right of choice against the will of the parent. Paris is, therefore, a true tragic character, who has an end justifiable in itself, which, however, collides with a higher justifiable end, and he perishes in the conflict ; for the intensity of Romeo is such that he slays the man who stands in the way of his union, as well as slays himself when union is impossible.

II. 1. Such is, in the main, the first general movement of the play, terminating in the marriage of Romeo and Juliet. We are now prepared for the second movement, namely, the separation of the happy pair, followed by the struggle of Juliet with her parents and the suitor Paris, to the death of the lovers. This separation has already had its external cause given in the First Act, though the fundamental motive lies in the hate of the two families. For Tybalt seems to have regarded the presence of a Montague at the masquerade as an audacious affront to his house ; he, therefore, seeks a quarrel with Romeo. But, for the latter, all the enmity against the Capulets has vanished in his union with Juliet. Romeo

quietly endures the insult of Tybalt, but his friend Mercutio takes up the quarrel. A conflict ensues, in which Mercutio is slain. The passionate reaction now comes over Romeo; the old enmity breaks out; he slays Tybalt. Again the hate of the two families has disturbed public order. The State appears, in the person of the Prince, and decrees the immediate banishment of Romeo, who has so deeply violated the principle of authority.

This Mercutio, who has become the instrument of the banishment of his friend, and fallen a sacrifice to his own interference, is a character in every way noteworthy. He is the mocker who has not earnestness sufficient for a real passion or a deep conviction. His chief mental trait is humor, coupled with a light, airy fancy. The Poet has portrayed him in a series of situations, all quite different, yet all manifesting the same fundamental characteristic. First is his somewhat lengthy description of Queen Mab and her functions, wherein he makes fun of the fairy mythology, and wherein, at the same time, he manifests the most beautiful fancy. Here he makes the ideal world his sport, yet in a most ideal manner. Humor and fancy were never so harmoniously blended. Next he takes up the real world around him and treats it in a similar manner; he mocks in the most lively way the formality and affectation of the time — in particular, the formal training and fencing of Tybalt. But, above all, he is the mocker of love, and its manifestations in Romeo are the subject of infinite merriment. Such is the contrast. For the one, love has a tragic depth; for the other, a comic lightness. His fancy also finds expression in puns and conceits; he always sees the ridiculous side. He rallies Romeo, for instance, by not very delicate innuendoes, when the old

vious struggle, what must become of him now? Juliet is also caught; her fervor seems equally great. Both have loved at first sight. Through all this volcanic might of passion the tragic end is peering, for separation now means death.

Thus Romeo *has* changed, notwithstanding his protestations to Benvolio. This transition is the central point of the ~~whole~~ first movement of the play, and, indeed, gives the true motive for the tragic termination of the action. But it has been so generally misunderstood, according to our judgment of the drama, that the grounds for it require a full statement. It is declared that this sudden change from one individual to another is unnatural, and is, moreover, a great blemish in the work. The apparent lack of fidelity is said to give offense to our ethical feelings, and to destroy our respect for the hero. Also, Romeo seems now the most inconstant of lovers, but afterwards is faithful to death — which fact looks like an inconsistency in the character, and an unsolved contradiction in the play. The defenders of the Poet have injured him more deeply than his assailants; they have defended his work by destroying it. The first love of Romeo, so fully detailed by the author, is pronounced to be no love — a mere caprice. But a careful view of the circumstances will show that this change is, not only psychologically justifiable, but is the only adequate motive for the death of the lovers — that is, for the tragedy itself.

Romeo is consumed with the most ardent passion; its intensity is its great characteristic. He has given himself away, has made a complete sacrifice of his individuality, but there is no return for his devotion. This is the motive upon which the Poet has laid the chief stress; the first

love of Romeo was not reciprocated. The necessity of a corresponding passion is felt by everybody, though its logical basis is not usually thought of. Love is the surrender of the individual to one of the opposite sex, through the feelings. Each must find his or her emotional existence in the loved person ; each must be only through the other. This mutual sacrifice of self on the part of both constitutes the unity and harmony of love. For, when individuality thus offers itself upon the altar of affection, that same individuality, to be consistent with its own principle, must demand a like sacrifice from the second person ; otherwise, it is in utter contradiction with itself. A new individual must enter the bosom and take the place of that self which has been immolated.

But, let one side be wanting, the reciprocity is destroyed ; there is the sacrifice without the compensation. The lover loses, for a time at least, his own individuality, as far as his emotion is concerned, without gaining another. Hence he is harrassed with an internal struggle, more or less severe according to the intensity of the passion. As to the quantity of the literature of the world which is based upon unrequited love the reader can form his own estimate ; but it may be said to be the first, most natural, and most prevalent of all the collisions which spring from the tender passion. In such a struggle a restoration may be, and usually is, brought about by the healing influence of time. But the sacrifice may be so complete, and the passion so intense, that recovery is extremely difficult by this means — nay, impossible. Then there is only one other way — change the object ; find some new individual who will make the sacrifice. It is a matter of not uncommon experience that rejected lovers resort to these sudden trans-

fers of affection; not from spite, however, as is often supposed, but from a real necessity.

Such is the conflict in Romeo's bosom, and such is its solution. The fervor of his love does not permit him to recover himself; he, indeed, must change in order to get repose and harmonize the struggle. It is, therefore, not fickleness, but rather the permanence and strength of his passion, which causes its transference from Rosaline to Juliet. This change is, hence, grounded in the fact that his love is unrequited, and yet so intense that it must have an object — a corresponding sacrifice. ~~He cannot retrace~~ his steps. He is just seeking that which comes across his way in the form of Juliet, for Rosaline cannot now have any reality for him. The relief is instantaneous — he recovers himself at a bound. The merry mocker, Mercutio, cannot now drive him off by bitter jests, but is beaten at his own game, and compelled to exclaim: "Now art thou sociable; now art thou Romeo!" etc.

For Juliet, the motives are quite different; she has no case of unrequited affection on her hands. Hence the question may be asked, why then does she, too, so easily fall in love? Juliet is in the full bloom of youth — ready for the sacrifice, yet without its experience. Now, Romeo approaches her in the hot glow of his love, and, with his sly words and eyes darting flames from beneath his mask, he infuses into her soul all the strength of his passion. Nor is this anything unusual or unnatural, for man and woman belong together, and must come together unless there is a good reason for their remaining asunder. No such reason exists in the case of Juliet; she is taken by the first manifestation of love. Romeo gives a hint: "They (my lips) pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair;"

she requites; a kiss seals their union. Thus her love is motivated by that of Romeo, and the intensity and completeness of his sacrifice call for and demand an equal intensity and completeness in her devotion. Her possible tragic destiny also peers through at this point; the fate of her lover must be hers.

The intensity now reached by Romeo and Juliet is kept up by both throughout the play, and constitutes its great distinguishing feature; for the love of man and woman has here attained such a potency that neither can exist without the other. In the vast majority of mankind it never reaches quite so high a degree; it stops this side of death. And, indeed, it should never reach quite so high a degree, for thus it turns to guilt and prepares the tragic fate. Romeo and Juliet are devoted to one another as individuals, and not so much to the Family as an institution. Their love thus turns to an ethical violation, since it renders domestic life impossible if the one chance be lost. The rational object of marriage is for man to exist in the Family, which, if it cannot be reached through one person, must be sought through another. The Institution is higher than the Individual; but, in the present drama, the love of an individual assails the Family on its universal side; thus there must result a tragic termination. For, truly considered, love, which is the emotional ground of the Family, is here destroying the Family itself. Love thus annihilates its own object, puts an end to itself; so do Romeo and Juliet, its bearers.

The first act concludes with the excitation of their mutual love. The next step is the mutual acknowledgment, so that their union rises out of mere emotion into conscious purpose. This declaration to each other gives

the famous balcony scene, one of those everlasting reprints of the human heart. The theme is the sacrifice of the sexual individual, which results in the formation of a higher unity, the Family. Previously this unity was only felt; now both declare it to be their most exalted principle forever. The activities of the mind, particularly the imagination which makes symbols, and the understanding which grasps relations, are intensified into a whirlwind of energy by their passion. In the scenes of their meeting, all external nature around them is seized upon and made the bearer of their emotions; sun, moon, stars, birds, the lark and nightingale, are turned into the ministers of their love. The play of mental activity is as great as that of passion, and relieves the directness and blunt expression of mere sentiment. The conceits, however, and the images are not always in good taste, though they are, in general, psychologically true; the characterization cannot do without them, for they exhibit the strength of the emotion of the lovers. Their intense feeling seeks the world to find means for utterance; their minds hunt up the most recondite relations between objects; all externality seems there only to express love. The hatred of their families is burnt up in a consuming fire; both are ready to disown their own names if these furnish any obstacle to their union. Still, they feel that a new and terrible conflict has arisen which they now have to face — a conflict with the ancient prejudice and hostility of their families.

But their union is not yet complete; it must be carried out to its full realization in marriage. This the deep and earnest nature of Juliet has already demanded:

“If that thy bent of love be honorable,
Thy purpose marriage.”

It is no holiday flirtation, but her ethical feeling is even stronger than her love, since, rather than violate it, she is ready to undergo the pain of separation. She even distrusts her strong emotion; it is too rash, too sudden; she wants time to give it permanence. This ethical element in the character of Juliet is generally not attended to. She is considered, on the one hand, as a simple, unreflecting girl; on the other hand, she is sometimes represented with a dash of coquetry. Both these views are mistaken. She here first insists upon due deliberation, and then seeks the true ethical union found only in marriage. For in marriage the Family is first realized, since to the emotional or subjective element of love there is thus added the objective or rational element of an institution. This consummation could be reached, according to the belief of the time, only through religion, which gave the divine sanction to the union already formed in the emotions. Thus the Family was called into existence, as it were, by the fiat of God; it was a new and holy creation in the world, which was under His special blessing and protection. The ceremony is, therefore, performed by a priest of the church. Their unity is now a reality.

The marriage of the lovers introduces us to the grand mediator of the play, Friar Laurence. We are ushered into his presence in the quiet of early morn. The holy man of contemplation is shown in all the surroundings; the very atmosphere breathes serenity and repose. His reflection leads him to consider the contradictions of nature and of mind; he notes that excess calls forth strife; virtue itself, being strained, turns to its opposite. Here is given the germ of his character. He recognizes the source of all conflict, and seeks the means of its recon-

ciliation. He naturally employs the religious form of expressing this contradiction—grace on the one hand, rude will on the other. He has himself subordinated all the passions of the soul; his order indicates his exclusion from secular struggles; he stands in striking contrast to the passion-tossed world around him. In southern climates, where the blood is hot, it is the main duty of the confessor to assuage the harrassing emotions of the individual who cannot control them himself, and, hence, must have them controlled from without. The Friar is the mediator of the whole community. The very intensity of their passions demands one who is without passion to direct, advise, and soothe. Romeo, we see, has been a frequent visitor; the Friar was his confidant when no one else was, and has already often calmed his excited feelings concerning Rosaline. Such is the beautiful character of the Friar, standing in the midst of this tempest of passion, controlling, directing, pacifying it; for both love and hate seem equally ungovernable and destructive without his reconciling presence. He is represented as a profound observer of the natural properties of objects; hence he can provide a drug of such wonderful potency for Juliet. But his chief mental principle is the shunning of all extremes; and just here lies the basis of his deceptions, of the pious frauds which he practices. A rigid moralist he is not, and cannot be in consistency with his principle,

“Virtue itself turns to vice, being misapplied.”

As mediator, he has to smooth over difficulties and harmonize collisions; he cannot be hampered by moral punctilios at every step. He brushes them away; but still he is true to the highest end, and subordinates to it

every minor scruple. It is to be noticed that all of Shakespeare's mediatorial characters have quite the same traits; they falsify and deceive, without the least hesitation, in order to accomplish their important mediations. The Friar unites Romeo and Juliet in marriage, for this is the only solution; separation means death; religion adds its sanction to love, to the right of subjectivity, even against the consent of the parents; and the new family unites within itself the heirs of both the Capulets and the Montagues, whose ancient hatred must henceforth vanish in their descendants. Such a consummation is assuredly a great religious object.

(b.) It is now time to go back and bring up to this point the counter-movement to the marriage, resulting from the wooing of Paris. He is the competitor of Romeo for the hand of Juliet; but he rests his suit, not on the love of the daughter, but on the consent of the parent, and herein proceeds according to the received social formality. Just the opposite is Romeo, who entirely disregards formality, but acts from love. Hence arises the conflict. Both parents of Juliet favor Paris, but the father at first declares distinctly that the consent of the daughter must be obtained; afterwards he abandons this principle, and tries to force the marriage with Paris—an act which brings on all the tragic consequences of the drama. The strength of each suitor was shown at the masquerade. Love proved to be more powerful than form; hence Paris had his chosen one carried off from under his very eyes.

This excellent young man, upon whom certainly the Poet nowhere casts any reproach, has been often misjudged by critics. He is not a villain, not a fortune

hunter, unworthy of Juliet; the only drawback is, he does not possess her heart. On the contrary, he is a truly ethical character. His manner of courtship was certainly the established custom of the time. His conduct and final death at the tomb of Juliet show that he was influenced by love. He was not, therefore, seeking a marriage from interest. The pith of his contrast with Romeo is that, although he is a worthy man, he has not, and cannot have, Juliet's affection, which fact, however, is nowhere made known to him in the play. His love is unrequited, like the first love of Romeo; hence it cannot form a rational basis for marriage. Such is the collision of the right of choice against the will of the parent. Paris is, therefore, a true tragic character, who has an end justifiable in itself, which, however, collides with a higher justifiable end, and he perishes in the conflict; for the intensity of Romeo is such that he slays the man who stands in the way of his union, as well as slays himself when union is impossible.

II. 1. Such is, in the main, the first general movement of the play, terminating in the marriage of Romeo and Juliet. We are now prepared for the second movement, namely, the separation of the happy pair, followed by the struggle of Juliet with her parents and the suitor Paris, to the death of the lovers. This separation has already had its external cause given in the First Act, though the fundamental motive lies in the hate of the two families. For Tybalt seems to have regarded the presence of a Montague at the masquerade as an audacious affront to his house; he, therefore, seeks a quarrel with Romeo. But, for the latter, all the enmity against the Capulets has vanished in his union with Juliet. Romeo

quietly endures the insult of Tybalt, but his friend Mercutio takes up the quarrel. A conflict ensues, in which Mercutio is slain. The passionate reaction now comes over Romeo; the old enmity breaks out; he slays Tybalt. Again the hate of the two families has disturbed public order. The State appears, in the person of the Prince, and decrees the immediate banishment of Romeo, who has so deeply violated the principle of authority.

This Mercutio, who has become the instrument of the banishment of his friend, and fallen a sacrifice to his own interference, is a character in every way noteworthy. He is the mocker who has not earnestness sufficient for a real passion or a deep conviction. His chief mental trait is humor, coupled with a light, airy fancy. The Poet has portrayed him in a series of situations, all quite different, yet all manifesting the same fundamental characteristic. First is his somewhat lengthy description of Queen Mab and her functions, wherein he makes fun of the fairy mythology, and wherein, at the same time, he manifests the most beautiful fancy. Here he makes the ideal world his sport, yet in a most ideal manner. Humor and fancy were never so harmoniously blended. Next he takes up the real world around him and treats it in a similar manner; he mocks in the most lively way the formality and affectation of the time—in particular, the formal training and fencing of Tybalt. But, above all, he is the mocker of love, and its manifestations in Romeo are the subject of infinite merriment. Such is the contrast. For the one, love has a tragic depth; for the other, a comic lightness. His fancy also finds expression in puns and conceits; he always sees the ridiculous side. He rallies Romeo, for instance, by not very delicate innuendoes, when the old

nurse appears bearing a message from Juliet. Thus the world dissolves in his humor — he assails everything with it; all his surroundings furnish only food for his sport. But there is nothing cynical or bitter in his character; it is a laugh — light, airy, mercurial, like his name. What causes such a man to fight? His volatile nature is brought into trying circumstances that require, at least, strong self-command, which he does not possess; it must fly off, for it has no controlling center within itself. He thinks that Romeo has been insulted, and has basely submitted; puff! he is up and off. This, added to an evident dislike of Tybalt, seems to be the motive of the fight. Though the relative of the Prince, he is the friend of Romeo, and takes sides with the house of Montague. As an offset to him, Paris, another relative of the Prince, allies himself to the Capulets, and perishes. The last words of Mercutio are full of repentance, though he cannot refrain from the jest and pun with his dying breath. The logical justification of his fate is not very apparent, but it probably lies in the fact that he, though an outsider, is the first man to stir up afresh the enmity of the two houses after it had been healed, or ultimately must have been healed, by the marriage of their two representatives, as well as by the conciliatory conduct of Romeo. The hate breaks forth anew — Mercutio is the first victim; it is his own act which calls forth his death. His mistake he sees, and his final curse is upon "your houses."

2. (a.) Banishment is decreed; the unity of love must be violently torn asunder. The conduct and feelings of the lovers, which are now manifested, are in the most perfect consonance with their principle. Both think of death; loss of existence is preferable to the loss of union,

so great is its intensity. They are brought forward in different scenes, but their pathos is quite the same. The tragic motive is again manifest—permanent separation means destruction. In the breast of Juliet, however, there is a double conflict—her dearest relative has been slain by her husband, and now that husband must leave her. Not dissimilar is the situation of Ophelia. Juliet, in the beginning, thinks of the death of her cousin, Tybalt. Her family thus comes up first in her mind, and she curses Romeo. But soon the deeper principle manifests itself; that which rends her heart is the separation, and she says directly that she would rather endure the destruction of her whole family—Tybalt, father, and mother—than the banishment of her husband. Just as great is the desperation of Romeo. Again he must betake himself to the Friar, who will comfort him with “adversity’s sweet milk, philosophy,” and will soothe his agitated soul—the true function of the religious mediator. The good monk adopts the only solution possible—the separation must not be permanent. Romeo can only be buoyed up with hope of a speedy return. This hope is furnished to him by the Friar. He is now prepared to endure the parting from Juliet, which accordingly takes place, and the separation is accomplished.

(b.) Let us now go back again and consider that part of the action which collides with this union, namely, the suit of Paris, supported by the consent of the parents. In the absence of Romeo this part becomes the sole element of the drama, and Juliet has to support the struggle alone. Her fidelity is to be tried to the utmost. Afflictions will be laid upon her, increasing in intensity, till death; but she will never, for a moment, flinch in her

devotion. The father, who previously asserted for his daughter the right of love, now changes his basis, and commands Juliet to marry Paris. This change lies in his impulsive, volatile nature, as far as the Poet has given to it any motive. He suddenly makes a "desperate tender" of his daughter's love without having consulted her choice. It is one of the turning-points of the drama, this abrupt reversal of his former opinion. Juliet is continually weeping. Her father thinks her mourning is for her relative, Tybalt, while it is really on account of the absence of Romeo. She thus seems to have a share in her own misfortune, by not informing her parent of her love; but, then, any declaration of the sort would have been equally fatal. It is the tragic dilemma — either way leads to death. Paris is pressing his suit; both the father and the mother of Juliet favor him; she resists. The result is that she is berated by her parents, and threatened with expulsion from home and with disinheritance. Here is the next affliction after the banishment of Romeo. The conflict between the right of love and the will of the parent is manifested in all its intensity, but she cannot yield. She resorts for comfort to the nurse, who knows of her love, and from whom she expects sympathy; but this last source, too, is cut off. The old woman advises her to submit, and cites every consideration but the right one, namely, love — which is the sole possible motive with Juliet. Thereupon she is done with the nurse; their friendly relation henceforth ceases, and the nurse disappears from every essential mediation of the play.

The nurse has been hitherto one of the important instrumentalities of the drama; her function is partly mediatorial, though in a far less degree than that of the Friar. Her

portrait is taken from nature direct; nothing can be more real and life-like. She almost supplies, in care and affection, the place of a mother; she is the friend and confidant of Juliet, while Lady Capulet appears in the distance, a stranger to the nursery, and the supporter of the marriage with Paris. The maternal feeling of Lady Capulet does not seem very strong. She leaves the impression of a cold, heartless woman. The nurse, on the contrary, supports, for a time at least, the love of Juliet against her family. She is, however, of low birth, vulgar in language, and coarse in character; hence is ready for the sway of interest. The ideal devotion of Juliet she can in no sense appreciate—it lies far beyond her horizon—and so she advises its abandonment. The realistic fullness and limited range of her characterization gives the clearest picture in the play; her garrulity, her habit of citing old memories in which she dwells, her sudden changes of thought, her trickery and teasing, are all united into the most vivid individuality.

As soon as the nurse gives this advice to abandon Romeo her mediatorial function ceases; the case is out of her reach. The Friar alone can understand and solve the difficulty. Accordingly Juliet betakes herself to his cell. At once she finds both sympathy and aid, for it is the character of the Friar to give complete validity to love. He is ready with a plan—she must drink off a liquor which produces the semblance of death, and be buried in the vault of her family, whither he and Romeo will come to her rescue. This means appears far-fetched and without adequate motive. Why could she not have gone directly to his cell and secreted herself, or have slipped off and hurried to Romeo at Mantua? Yet the design of the

Poet is manifest. Since he is portraying love in its highest intensity, he makes it endure every gradation of trial, and finally death itself. The most terrible thing to the human imagination is, probably, the idea of being buried alive, and shut up in a vault with dead bodies. But she, a tender girl, resolves to undergo what would make the heart of the most courageous man blench. It is the affliction next to death, yet love gives her the daring to endure. Read her soliloquy as she drinks off the contents of the vial. There she recounts the possibilities; imagination starts up the direst phantasms; madness stares her in the face; still, she will drink. This occurrence, therefore, is in perfect harmony with the spirit of the play. Before death, Juliet is brought to the tomb alive. It is one of the series of trials, increasing in pain and horror, in whose fire her love must be tested.

But just here are incidents portrayed for which it is extremely difficult to find any adequate justification. What necessity of exhibiting the sorrow of the parents over their supposed dead child, which must be a false pathos to the audience? Friar Laurence again appears in his true role of mediator and consoler, but his dissimulation now seriously impairs his high ethical character. Both the weeping of the parents and the deception of the Friar could have been here omitted without injury to the action, and to the decided advantage of thought and logical consistency. In fact, this is the main defect of the entire drama. It has a certain natural fullness which makes it often vivid, but obscures its unity as a Whole. It lacks the more rigid adherence to a central thought found in the later works of the Poet.

The conflict of Juliet with the will of her parents is

thus solved by the plan of the Friar, who protects her against her family as he protected Romeo against the authority of the State. Nothing now seems in the way of the speedy reunion of the separated lovers. Romeo is still in exile, filled with longings and anticipations of the time when he will be restored to his Juliet. His thoughts by day and his dreams by night have no other employment. Suddenly the terrible news arrives — Juliet is dead. His love is at once all ablaze; he will still be united with her, though in death. He resolves to set out immediately for home. But herein he disobeys the Friar, and acts without the latter's knowledge. Thus the Friar's plan is interfered with and destroyed. Romeo proceeds upon mistaken information, and the good monk fails in his mediation. The lover hastens to the tomb, there to lie in death with Juliet, but he meets Paris. The latter attempts to interfere with his resolution, and to stand in the way of his union with Juliet. Paris is slain, for such is the intensity of this love that it destroys every obstacle in its way, and destroys itself when it cannot be realized. Thus Romeo kills himself, too, in preference to living without this union. Juliet wakes, sees her lover at her side, dead; she also cannot live apart from their union in the Family. They are thus alike in devotion, but it is manifest that Juliet is the truer and loftier character. Her sacrifice belongs to her sex — is its profoundest ethical principle. But Romeo does not rise above this same character. He is too much like a woman; his pathos is too feminine. A man must find some higher ethical principle for which he sacrifices existence; for example, the State. On this account Romeo can never be as great a favorite as Juliet; he falls below the true type of manhood.

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Again authority has been assailed; blood has been spilled in another fray. The Prince, as the representative of the State, appears the third and last time. There is, however, no one to punish. The play must explain itself. The Friar, together with the page of Paris and the servant of Romeo, unfold the causes of the untoward calamity. This is not an unnecessary appendage, for Shakespeare always makes, in the end, the play clear to its own actors; thus only is it complete in itself. The Friar, after telling all his plans of mediation, offers to die; but, of course, that man cannot perish who chiefly sought to ward off the tragic consequences of the fatal love.

Thus we see that the logical result of this feud has been the annihilation of the Family. Each house willed the destruction of the other, and therein the destruction of itself. For their conduct must return upon themselves, and the drama only portrays the manner of that return. Both families lose their children, their heirs, and, in their loss, must pass away forever. The Prince, too, suffers along with them, for "winking at the discords," and he declares, in the plainest terms, the great law of retribution by which all are punished.

We have now reached the termination of the second division or movement of the play, namely, the union of the lovers in death. Their last and greatest trial has been passed; both have remained true to love. Their tie was so strong, their oneness so complete, that they could not really exist as separate individuals. The grand object of the play has been frequently stated: It is to portray a love so intense that separation must cause death. But such a result is contrary to the common experience of mankind, and hence the Poet seeks every possible means for mani-

festing the *intensity* of the passion. That it lay in the character of Romeo never to recover his individuality, after it was once surrendered to his affection, is shown in the first movement of the play; the taking away of the loved object is literally the taking away of himself, so complete is his sacrifice. Juliet's passion is motived, both in kind and in degree, by that of Romeo; her devotion must be as great as his. The second movement of the tragedy portrays the separation of the pair—at first supposed to be only temporary; but the moment Romeo, and afterwards Juliet, become possessed of the notion that the separation will be eternal, self-destruction is the logical necessity of their characters. It is indeed the tragedy of love. This coloring of intensity it keeps throughout, amid all its vagaries and excrescences. This is, in fact, the deep underlying unity of the work, whose power every one must feel. The guilt of the unhappy pair must be placed here, also, if we can predicate guilt of them, and certainly we must do so if we are able to justify the tragedy. The emotional nature of man must be controlled and subordinated to the rational principle, and, under no circumstances, can it have the right to utterly absorb and destroy individual existence.

III. The third movement is the reconciliation of the two hostile houses. The Prince insists upon it. The public order of the city has been violated; he has also lost two of his kinsmen in the feud; he, too, has been punished in his family. This part of the action is exceedingly short, but it must rank as coördinate with the other two divisions if it is to have any place in the play at all. Thus the tragic intention of the whole drama seems, for a moment, to vanish in the repentance and reconciliation of the Montagues and Capulets.

An ingenious defense has been frequently set up concerning the necessity of this termination. But such a defense proves too much; it must, by implication, censure Shakespeare's greater and more mature tragedies in which this reconciliation does not take place. But the view has several other difficulties which must always excite a great deal of doubt concerning the propriety of such a conclusion. If the play be a tragedy, it would naturally seem to terminate with the death of the lovers, or with the explanation of the Friar. But, as it now stands, there is a mediation of the hate of the two houses. The question then arises: Was the fate of Romeo and Juliet only the means, or the end, of the action? To make it only the means would appear to destroy the whole purport of the play, which was, as above shown, to give an adequate motive for the death of the lovers. It must be confessed that there is a species of dualism which is not overcome by the present solution.

There is another important consideration which should not be omitted. Repentance ought to bring with it some fruition — some escape from the consequences of guilt. It is hard — indeed, it is a contradiction — for the individual to repent and then to be as bad off as he was before. The parents have lost their children. Repentance can now do little good — at least it cannot save their families, which was the question at issue. Shakespeare has frequently employed repentance. It is, in fact, the great mediating principle in that class of his serious plays which may be called mediated dramas, as distinguished from tragedies and pure comedies. But repentance implies restoration. It rescues those who yield to its influence from the tragic consequences of their deeds. The present play, however,

exhibits an intermediate stage — a sort of transition from pure tragedy to the special or mediated drama, owing, perhaps, to the youthfulness of the author, who had not yet strictly determined the different provinces of his Art.

OTHELLO.

The impression left by this play is generally said to be that of sadness and despair. Life seems given over to the sport of external influences, and man is swept to destruction whether his conduct be good or bad. Villainy and cunning, it is thought, are portrayed as too successful and powerful, while innocence is exhibited as too weak and unfortunate. There is often expressed a deep dissatisfaction at the result; virtue is not rewarded, or is even punished, and retribution does not manifest itself in its native might. Perhaps such will always be the first and most immediate impression upon the auditor or reader. But this melancholy view of the work springs from a hasty judgment — from taking into account only a portion of its various elements. On the one hand, Othello and Desdemona are not innocent, but are guilty of a violation of ethical principles, which calls forth their punishment. And, on the other hand, Iago is not the incarnation of villainy for its own sake, but he has some very strong and very natural grounds for his conduct. In this play, as in all others of Shakespeare, a careful analysis is necessary in order to bring all the motives to the surface, and to adequately comprehend their thought and purpose. They must be marshaled before the mind in their relation and in their completeness. If only a part of what is told us by the Poet remains in the memory, the judgment is not likely to be correct. Accordingly we may expect that

diligent study and comparison will bring to light some less manifest elements which must have an essential influence in determining the character of the whole drama.

It is well known that there is always ready to be made, against this kind of criticism, the charge of seeking and finding what the Poet never intended. Such a charge may be just sometimes, but it usually means that the objector did not think of the various points in question when he read the play. Hence he infers that Shakespeare could not have thought of them. There is often an ill-concealed egotism lying at the basis of such statements, for the benefit of which one reflection ought always to be made. It took Shakespeare weeks, perhaps years, to plan and write *Othello*. If so much time was required for his mind, in order to make the drama, how much time will you (the objector), with your mind, need in order to comprehend it? To enter into his conception thoroughly, to see his work arising from all sides and coming together into a complete and harmonious whole, will demand more than a three hours' reading or representation.

There are three essential divisions or movements of the entire action. The first is the external conflict in the Family. The right of the daughter to choose a Moor for her husband is asserted against the will of the parent. Both sides appeal to the State, which decides in favor of the marriage, and Othello carries off his bride in triumph. The guilt of Desdemona is here indicated. The second movement shows the internal conflict in the Family between husband and wife. The married pair, though successful in their external struggle with the father, are now rent asunder; for between such characters no secure and permanent ethical union is possible. Jealousy must

arise. Iago seized only what was already prepared, and used it for his own purposes. The guilt of Othello and his Ancient is here shown. The third movement is the retribution, which brings home to every person the consequences of his deeds. Tragedies usually have only two parts — guilt and retribution. But there may be an introduction, as is seen in the first movement of the present play; or there may be an appendage to the tragic action, as is the case with *Romeo and Juliet*.

I. The presupposition of the drama is the love, elopement, and marriage of Othello and Desdemona, who constitute the single central thread of the first movement, and with whose union three leading persons come into conflict. They are thus already joined in marriage, against which the hostile elements begin to array themselves. First comes the rejected, yet determined, suitor, Roderigo, who has been ignominiously dismissed by the father, and apparently disregarded by the daughter. Still, he persists; the great end of his existence is to secure her hand, for which purpose he is willing to spend large sums of money. This weakness makes him a fit subject for the practices of Iago, who buoys him up with hope and draws at will from his purse. But, when the marriage is sanctioned by the State, and is beyond reversal, what will poor Roderigo do? Since the object of his life is to attain Desdemona, he is easily led into the thought of attaining her in unholy fashion, when she can no longer be his lawful wife. He is first foolish in pursuing such an object; then he becomes immoral, and assails the Family. Roderigo is the white suitor of Desdemona, and stands in striking contrast to the black suitor, Othello. She prefers the hero of a different race to the imbecile of her

own nation. But his chief function is to be the ready instrument of Iago, who uses him like the merest tool, and destroys him when he no longer subserves any purpose.

The second enemy is Iago, whose hate is not so much directed against the marriage as against Othello in person. Hence he plays a very subordinate part in the first movement of the drama, but is reserved for the second collision. To unfold and arrange in proper order and prominence the different motives which actuate him is one of the chief duties of a criticism on this work. In his conversation with Roderigo he assigns as the cause of his hate that he has been degraded in rank, through having a less experienced and less meritorious officer promoted over his head, by Othello. Hereafter he is going to look out for himself, since nobody else will pay any attention to his claims. He proposes to employ any means in his power to accomplish his end; everything high and holy — honesty, fidelity, morality — is to be trampled under foot if standing in his way. The service of the individual, therefore, he declares to be his ultimate principle. But, to attain his purpose with success, there must be disguise. "I am not what I am," is his curt and striking statement. His instrumentality is to be dissimulation.

Iago asserts, in the strongest manner, the supremacy of reason; men can make out of their body and their appetite what they will. Still, his reason extends not beyond subjective cunning; he ignores the validity of all ethical principles. Virtue is a pretense, love is merely lust, reputation is a delusion. The question naturally arises, why has his intelligence become so debauched? The ground thereof lies in his own experience, as will be

pointed out hereafter. But here also there is a large element of pretense, since he knows the exact nature of his conduct. Mark, too, that for his hatred of Othello he has not assigned to Roderigo the true motive; he is already dissembling in accordance with his principle. His talk is intended for Roderigo alone, whom he wishes to keep as an instrument, and to whom he is compelled, therefore, to give some motive for his conduct and some clew to his future action. For Roderigo, fool as he is, must have a plausible explanation of the strange fact that the Ancient of Othello works against his master, before any money will be forthcoming.

— But the true motive for Iago's hate is given in his first, and also in his succeeding soliloquies, but nowhere in his conversation with others, since he would not be likely to announce his own shame, or herald his self-degrading suspicions. He considers that Othello has destroyed the chastity of his wife. Public rumor has noised the scandal abroad. He is made the object of scorn; he feels that he has suffered the deepest injury which man is capable of giving or receiving. This is the thought which gnaws the heart of Iago, and spurs him to revenge.

—"The thought thereof

Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards,
And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till I be evened with him."

Such was his own declaration to himself, whom he certainly had no motive for deceiving. Nor is it consistent with his shrewd understanding to assume that his belief rests on self-deception — that he really did not know what he was about. Iago has declared his actual conviction — a conviction which is confirmed by events which afterwards

transpire. It is often taken for granted that his suspicions are wholly groundless — in fact, that he does not believe them himself. The question of Othello's guilt with Emilia belongs to the second division of the play, where it will be hereafter considered. But that Iago is sincere in his belief cannot be consistently questioned. The single motive usually assumed for his conduct is what he states to Rod-rigo about the lack of promotion. Such a view, however, is psychologically false; Iago is not the man to tell the truth to another and lie to himself. Moreover, why is the form of the soliloquy employed, unless to express the real internal ground of his action, which could not be imparted to others?

With this interpretation there is a motive quite adequate ^X for the subsequent vindictive conduct of Iago; otherwise, he is an unnatural character — a monstrosity. His slight in regard to promotion would doubtless excite his enmity, but not an enmity sufficient to involve Desdemona in destruction, or even Othello. To inflict worse than death upon a man because he did not advance a subordinate when he could have done so is altogether disproportionate to the offense; but to cause his wife to perish also is merely horrible. Thus Iago is a monster, a wild beast, and needs no motive at all — not even neglect of promotion — to bring on a rabid fit of cruelty. But what then becomes of the artistic merit and beauty of this drama? Moreover, Shakespeare's rule is to motive all his most important characters; such a being as the villain pure and simple is not to be found in any of his works. The second motive is, therefore, the true one, and at the same time is adequate. The family of Iago has been ruined by Othello; now, — Iago, in his turn, will ruin the family of the destroyer of

his domestic life. Hence Desdemona is included in his retaliation. He thus requites the Moor with like for like. His conduct is logical, and his revenge only equals the offense. But there is absolutely no proportion between motive and deed, if he involved Othello's family in destruction merely because the latter would not promote him. Such seems to be the proper relation of the two grand motives mentioned by the Poet; the first one is intended only for Roderigo, while the second is the true and single motive for the subsequent actions of Iago.

The third opponent of the marriage is the father, Brabantio. Here we have the essential part of the first movement — the conflict of the Family carried up into the State. The opposition of Brabantio gives the collision which Shakespeare always takes particular delight in portraying — the collision between the right of choice on the part of the daughter and the will of the parent. It is often supposed that the tragic destiny of Desdemona is motivated by her disobedience; but such a view will not bear investigation. Shakespeare everywhere justifies the right of choice when it is the sole issue, and therein he is true to the modern consciousness. It belongs to the woman to say who shall be her husband, for she, and not her father, has to form with him the unity of emotion which lies at the basis of the Family. But, even if we grant that there is some guilt in such conduct, it certainly cannot be tragic guilt, which involves the destruction of the individual. The ethical code of Shakespeare is plainly against this interpretation, for he always mediates such a conflict by the triumph of the daughter. The case of Romeo and Juliet cannot be taken to support the contrary view, for it, too, offers a peculiar ground of tragic destiny. Assuredly

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Another motive must, hence, be sought, which the Poet has not failed to indicate. It lies in the fact that between husband and wife existed the difference of race. An ethical union is impossible under such circumstances; the chasm is too wide—at least in the present condition of mankind. The Family, like all institutions, is grounded in prescription; this prescription has placed upon marriage certain limitations which cannot be violated without giving the deepest offense to the ethical feelings. The principle of prescription belongs to every age and nation, in different degrees, and is shared by all the truly moral people; those who violate it are regarded as outcasts. A difference of rank often destroys the possibility of an ethical union, though the parties are of the same race and of the same country. In Europe, to-day, the marriage of a lord and servant girl collides with the moral consciousness of the whole public. The rational basis for such a strong sentiment is not wanting; it is that, where so great a difference exists, the unity demanded by the Family is impossible. Both parties know that they have violated one ethical element of marriage; hence comes the dark suspicion that another ethical element of marriage may be as readily disregarded, namely, chastity. Therefore the jealousy which fires Othello will hardly fail to arise from such a union, and turn it into a source of bitterness and death.

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A correct appreciation of this subject is not without difficulties in our time ; any view is likely to be assailed with the charge of prejudice. But there seems to be no doubt that Shakespeare makes race an ethical element of marriage, as important as chastity. Nor does he differ much from the great majority of mankind at present. That philanthropist is yet to be found who would be willing to see his daughter marry an African, however intense might be their love. His repugnance does not necessarily proceed from prejudice, but from the conviction that

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Desdemona, therefore, asserts the right of choosing her husband against the will of her father, which collision, as above said, is continually recurring in Shakespeare, and which he always solves by giving full validity to love, though in opposition to parental authority. But in the present instance he has surrounded the choice of the young girl with a peculiar obstacle, and introduced an element found nowhere else in his dramas. The love of Desdemona is made to leap over quite all the social limitations known to man; she bids defiance, not only to the behests of Family, but also to the feelings of nationality and to the instincts of race. She is a practical cosmopolitan.

Her father, Brabantio, is decidedly of the opposite character. He is not wholly illiberal in his external conduct; nevertheless, he bears the stamp of a hide-bound patrician, devoted more to his class than to his country. He would hardly be called national in his feelings; the cosmopolitan love of his daughter, therefore, excites in his bosom the liveliest emotions. It is, indeed, so incomprehensible to him that he can only account for it by the employment of some supernatural means on the part of the Moor. His limits are essentially his own order. But he cannot avoid taking his share of the blame; it is his own conduct which has led to the unfortunate result. Othello has been a frequent guest at his house, and thus he has himself furnished the opportunity of the courtship. For Othello had rendered the most important services to the State. On account of these services he was tolerated — indeed, welcomed to the home of the Venetian aristocrat. But never for a moment did the latter think of removing the social ban. The limits of race Othello has thus broken down on one side — he has obtained honor and high command in the State. Here he cannot be barred out, for he is the chief instrument of its existence. It might be thought that these civil distinctions are higher than any other. This may be so; still, they cannot overcome social distinctions — or prejudices, if such it were better to call them. The contrast is drawn in the most striking manner by the Poet. Brabantio admires him, treats him with the kindness of a friend, regards him as a benefactor, often invites him to his own house, and seems to accord to him complete social equality. Yet, when it comes to have Othello as a son-in-law, his nature revolts. For him the limit of race is impassible; he would prefer the booby Roderigo, because he is

a Venetian, to the hero Othello, because he is a Moor. Brabantio can only curse fatherhood when he contemplates his descendants of a different race.

But this narrow, Venetian view of things is an absurdity, and cannot be permanent. The State which thus defends itself by the aid of a distinct and despised race must expect to bestow honors upon those to whom it owes its own existence. That race cannot long be excluded from social equality, under such circumstances, for the State is the higher, and must give the greater validity to the instrumentalities of its own perpetuity. Hence these social distinctions will be ignored or subordinated, in the end, by the State. Consequently, we see in this play that the Duke, the head of authority, can only confirm the union of Othello and Desdemona. Such is the strife here portrayed between social prejudice and acquired honors by an individual of a despised race. It is very manifest that the Venetians must themselves defend their State if they wish to preserve intact their Society. The latter is subordinate to the former.

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Such is the collision in the Family. We are now prepared to see the same conflict pushed forward into the State. Brabantio has roused the neighborhood, and is in hot pursuit of the lovers. He finds the Moor, arrests him as a criminal, and cites him before the highest tribunal of justice. But mark! even before the arrival of Brabantio,

a messenger of the government has come in great haste for Othello. The Duke is in pressing need of his services. The country is in danger; the Turk is threatening Cyprus. The two conflicting elements are thus brought together side by side. Othello obeys the double summons — on the one hand as a criminal, and on the other hand as the defender of the country. Then follows the trial. It is the same tribunal which has to try him as a malefactor and to appoint him to command against the foe. Brabantio, in his accusation, can only account for such an unnatural love by the employment of witchcraft or of some potent drug. Such is his charge. The reproach of race is always on his lips; to him it is inconceivable that his daughter should fall in love with a black monster whom she feared to look upon. How his fellow-patricians were affected by his situation may be judged from the language of the Duke, before he knows who the offender is:

“Whoe’er he be that in this foul proceeding
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself,
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
After its own sense; yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.”

But, though the Duke might condemn his own son, he could not condemn Othello. The decision is a very unwilling one, but how can it be helped? The choice must be made — the safety of the Nation or the punishment of the offender. The appeal of Brabantio is, doubtless, most powerful. His “brothers of the State cannot but feel this wrong as their own,” and, if such actions be permitted, who will be their children — the future rulers of Venice? But there can be only one result of such a trial;

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That the husband's opinion of Emilia is true is very plainly indicated in the last scene of the Fourth Act, where she openly admits that chastity is not the principle of her life. Othello is also well acquainted with her character. He knows of her falsehood and infidelity; he will not believe any of her statements, and loads her with the most opprobrious epithets.

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the knowledge of her habits which Othello betrays. But the veil is never wholly removed. Why does not the Poet openly state the offense, so as to leave no doubt? It is evident that he does not wish to soil the union with Desdemona by dwelling on Othello's incontinence, nor does he desire to throw into the background the difference of race as the leading motive of the play. Still, he would not have us forget the dark surmise; there it remains suspended over the Moor to the last. Iago, to be sure, is a liar; but his lies are meant for others, and not for himself. Besides, Iago is not more certain at first than we, his readers and hearers, are; but the complete success of his plan, which is based on the Moor's guilt, confirms, both for him and for us, the truth of the suspicion.

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Her father, Brabantio, is decidedly of the opposite character. He is not wholly illiberal in his external conduct; nevertheless, he bears the stamp of a hide-bound patrician, devoted more to his class than to his country. He would hardly be called national in his feelings; the cosmopolitan love of his daughter, therefore, excites in his bosom the liveliest emotions. It is, indeed, so incomprehensible to him that he can only account for it by the employment of some supernatural means on the part of the Moor. His limits are essentially his own order. But he cannot avoid taking his share of the blame; it is his own conduct which has led to the unfortunate result. Othello has been a frequent guest at his house, and thus he has himself furnished the opportunity of the courtship. For Othello had rendered the most important services to the State. On account of these services he was tolerated — indeed, welcomed to the home of the Venetian aristocrat. But never for a moment did the latter think of removing the social ban. The limits of race Othello has thus broken down on one side — he has obtained honor and high command in the State. Here he cannot be barred out, for he is the chief instrument of its existence. It might be thought that these civil distinctions are higher than any other. This may be so; still, they cannot overcome social distinctions — or prejudices, if such it were better to call them. The contrast is drawn in the most striking manner by the Poet. Brabantio admires him, treats him with the kindness of a friend, regards him as a benefactor, often invites him to his own house, and seems to accord to him complete social equality. Yet, when it comes to have Othello as a son-in-law, his nature revolts. For him the limit of race is impassible; he would prefer the booby Roderigo, because he is



a Venetian, to the hero Othello, because he is a Moor. Brabantio can only curse fatherhood when he contemplates his descendants of a different race.

But this narrow, Venetian view of things is an absurdity, and cannot be permanent. The State which thus defends itself by the aid of a distinct and despised race must expect to bestow honors upon those to whom it owes its own existence. That race cannot long be excluded from social equality, under such circumstances, for the State is the higher, and must give the greater validity to the instrumentalities of its own perpetuity. Hence these social distinctions will be ignored or subordinated, in the end, by the State. Consequently, we see in this play that the Duke, the head of authority, can only confirm the union of Othello and Desdemona. Such is the strife here portrayed between social prejudice and acquired honors by an individual of a despised race. It is very manifest that the Venetians must themselves defend their State if they wish to preserve intact their Society. The latter is subordinate to the former.

Desdemona, therefore, refuses to make these distinctions of her father and countrymen. She is an artless girl, unacquainted with the world, and seems to have been brought up in pretty strict seclusion by her father. She sees the Hero — the all-sufficient man; this is enough to captivate her heart. She hears his adventures — how he has met the greatest obstacles of the world and conquered them all. He appears to be the master over accident. It is his bravery against external danger which is portrayed; no feats of mind, or skill, or cunning are recorded. His composition has in it more of the Achilles than of the Ulysses. On this weaker side, namely, the intellectual, he will here-

after be assailed, be overcome, and perish. He is essentially the Hero of surpassing courage and self-possession. Desdemona has, on the other hand, the characteristic element of the true woman — a loving trust. She must have a support to lean upon, a heart to confide in; the stronger they are, the more intense is her devotion. All the qualities most attractive to such a nature she sees before her. She has not imbibed the social prejudices of the time, or, perhaps, despises them; she sees Othello's "visage in his mind;" she ignores his color and race, and breaks through the barrier. Othello, too, is caught for the corresponding reason. The trust and devotion of the woman call forth love; the leaning for support arouses the most intense pleasure in giving support. The causes of their love are reciprocal:

"She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
And I loved her that she did pity them."

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tion. How was it possible to excite such a passion in a character like that of Othello? The free, open, unsuspecting nature of the Moor is noted by Iago himself; his noble and heroic disposition would appear least likely to be subject to jealousy. Yet this is the very form of revenge chosen by Iago with surpassing skill. This is, therefore, just the weak side of Othello's character. Why? The solution of the problem lies in the fact above mentioned — that Iago's suspicion concerning Emilia is true. Othello has been guilty of adultery; he is, therefore, aware that the infidelity of wives is a fact. Here lies the germ of his belief in the faithlessness of Desdemona. His own act thus comes home to him and renders him accursed; his faith in justice can only make him more ready to think that he will be punished through his wife, since that is the mode which his own guilt suggests. Such is the initial point of the fearful jealousy of the Moor, which Iago knows exactly how to reach, since it is a matter lying wholly within his own experience; and he knows also that Othello, on account of previous criminality, must be as capable of this passion as himself. Both the revenge of Iago and the jealousy of Othello, therefore, can be adequately motivated only by the guilty conduct of the Moor towards the Ancient's wife.

Moreover, there is no other ground for the relation of marriage between Iago and Emilia except as a basis for these two main motives of drama. Thus, too, we see one of the fundamental rules of Shakespeare vindicated — that man cannot escape his own deed; hence Othello is the author of his own fate, since by his guilt he has called up the avenger who will destroy him and his family, while, without the view above developed, he must appear as an

innocent sufferer deceived by a malicious villain. It will, therefore, be seen that two things of the greatest importance have their sole explanation in this view, namely, the manner of Iago's revenge, and his knowledge of the assailable point in Othello's character. Here also we find the solution of the Moor's contradictory nature. He is, in general, unsuspecting; but, on account of his guilt, he is capable of one suspicion, namely, that wives may be faithless. The Poet has thus added to the distinction of race—for which the Moor could not be blamed—a second motive, the criminal deed, of which he must take the responsibility. The military life of Othello will furnish the third principle—that of honor, which will impel him to destroy the wife whom he thinks to have violated it in its deepest and most tender part.

1. (*a.*) The plan of Iago, and the grounds upon which it reposes, have now been unfolded. The next task before us is to scan with care the instruments which he employs to effect his purpose. The first one is Roderigo, who stands in a wholly external relation to the main action, and is always introduced from the outside for some violent purpose. He is twice turned against Cassio, and is continually directed by the hand of Iago. His unholy pursuit has also brought him to Cyprus, where he is still fed with hope, and relieved of his money, by the artful Ancient. But he becomes very impatient; he is always angry at his first appearance in the scene, yet a few words from Iago fill him again with great expectations. It is curious what a predominating influence Iago's superior intelligence has over him. When alone, he knows that he is robbed and deceived; he even resolves to go home after giving Iago a good tongue-lashing. But he always

yields, even against his own judgment; he cannot resist the plausibility and flattery of the Ancient, and he twice exposes, and finally loses, his life in his foolish and unrighteous enterprise.

The second, and by all means the most important, instrument in the hands of Iago is the Lieutenant, Cassio. This man is in every way adapted for exciting Othello's jealousy. He is on intimate terms with Desdemona; he is fair in external appearance, gifted with the graces of deportment, and his youthful face stands in marked contrast to the older look of Othello. Modern parlance would call him a ladies' man. But the decisive fact in his portraiture is that he is an open, notorious libertine. Iago himself has reason to suspect him, too, of undue intimacy with Emilia. This suspicion—in itself by no means so improbable, on account of her character—is, however, not confirmed in other parts of the play. But, to remove all doubt concerning Cassio's moral weaknesses, the Poet has introduced a special person, the courtesan, Bianca. There is no other ground why such an offensive relation should be dragged into the drama. Cassio has been long acquainted with Othello, who, therefore, must have known his private habits. Cassio, it is manifest, is in every way a fit subject for suspicion, on account of his character, his external appearance, and his relation to Desdemona.

Already Iago has observed a familiarity—a little indiscreet, yet entirely innocent—between the Lieutenant and Desdemona. But Iago can do nothing unless he can bring about a total separation between Cassio and Othello, so that they will not communicate together. This, then, he proceeds to accomplish, thus destroying all opportunities for explanation, and giving occasion for the intercession

of Desdemona. The dark plan of Iago is wonderfully carried out; he holds and directs Cassio with one hand and Othello with the other, yet neither knows what is controlling him. The drunken brawl causes the Lieutenant to be dismissed. Roderigo here is made the external means. Dissimulation could not be more complete. Iago has three disguises; he makes three men, Roderigo, Cassio, and Othello, believe that he is working in their interest, yet is at the same time ruining them all. He hopes also to get Cassio's place, though the main motive is to wreak revenge upon Othello, of which Cassio is a convenient instrument. Ambition is not his deepest impelling power, but revenge.

At this point we behold the supreme phase of Iago's characterization: It is his confession that he is a villain. The form of the soliloquy again appears, in which he expresses his deepest convictions. He knows that he is involving the innocent and the guilty in one common destruction; he acknowledges that he is a devil clothed in his blackest sins—that is, Iago is entirely conscious of the nature of his deed, and does not try to conceal it from himself. He at first indulges in an ironical defense of the advice which he gives to Cassio for recovering the Moor's favor; in appearance it is the best possible counsel, but it is counteracted and turned into the most deadly poison by his own dark insinuations to Othello. Such a defense, however, is the divinity of Hell, from whose sophisms his mind, at least, is free. It is thus his great boast that his intelligence is not caught in the meshes of deceptive casuistry. He does not seriously try to defend his action; still, he will have his revenge. Iago is the self-conscious villain. He knows that he is overthrowing

the moral world, as far as his conduct goes; yet it must perish, since it stands in his way. There is no excusing of himself, no palliation of the deed.

“When devils will their blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now.”

How complete the consciousness, and how audacious the statement, of his own character! It has been said that Iago deceives himself with his display of motives; that he persuaded himself to believe a falsehood, in his accusation of Othello. This soliloquy ought to banish forever such an opinion. No man ever knew his own mind better than Iago. Here it is seen that he clearly comprehends and acknowledges the nature of his deed. He is aware that every man is a villain who does what he is doing. However deserved may be his revenge upon Othello, he can have no justification for ruining Cassio and Desdemona, and resorting to the means which he now employs.

The third instrument of Iago is Emilia, his wife, who is the devoted attendant of Desdemona, and is employed by the latter in her communication with the cashiered Lieutenant. Iago thus has a means of obtaining information concerning their plans. Desdemona is now set to interceding for Cassio; she is urged on by both Emilia and Cassio, who are in their turn directed by Iago. This part of the plan easily succeeds.

1. (b.) Such are the instruments; but Iago himself has to manage the far more difficult case of Othello in his relation to his wife, Desdemona. This brings us now to the main development of the drama, and, perhaps, the

most complete psychological portraiture in Shakespeare. Iago begins the manipulation of Othello's mind through a series of influences adapted exactly to the shifting phases of the Moor's disposition, and increasing in intensity to the end. Given a noble, unsuspecting character, the design is to portray those causes which not only turn it into the opposite of itself, but make it destroy its most beloved object. The primal basis to work upon lies in Othello's own consciousness of guilt. The first point is to faintly touch his suspicion, which is accomplished most easily, for he readily imagines what he himself has done to others may happen in his own case. We see how the slightest hint from Iago casts a shadow over his whole being.

Iago. — Ha! I like not that.

Othello. — What dost thou say?

Iago. — Nothing my lord, or if — I know not what.

Othello. — Was not that Cassio parted from my wife? etc.

A word from Desdemona is sufficient, however, to allay his mistrust, but another word from Iago is sufficient to arouse it anew in all its intensity. Can any one doubt that this hasty suspicion, on the part of an unsuspecting character, can have any other ground than the consciousness of the same kind of guilt which he is so ready to suspect in another? Iago's artifices are unquestionably skillful, but he found a most fruitful and well-prepared soil; and, besides, his very skillfulness rests upon his comprehending and utilizing so thoroughly the psychological effects of Othello's crime. It is impossible to think that an honest and innocent man could have been so easily led astray.

Othello's suspicion is now fully aroused, but with it the

difficulty of Iago's task is proportionately greater. How will the latter prevent that suspicion from becoming universal—from being directed against himself as well as against Cassio and Desdemona? His first plan, therefore, must be to confirm his own honesty in the mind of Othello with the same care and skill that he infuses distrust against the other two. He has to fill the Moor with suspicion, and, at the same time, to avoid the suspicion of doing that very thing.

It is this double, and apparently contradictory, ability that gives such a lofty idea of Iago's intellectual power. But how does he proceed to accomplish his purpose? At first, by the apparent unwillingness with which he tells his dark surmises, and by the pretended dislike with which he assails the reputation of people. In these cases he seems to manifest the most tender regard for the rights and character of others; indeed, he repeatedly confesses his own tendency to suspect wrongfully. Such a man appears to be absolutely just—more just, indeed, to others than to himself. But all these things might be the tricks of a false, disloyal knave, as Othello well knows and says. Now comes Iago's master-stroke, by which he completely spans the Moor's mind, and turns it in whatever direction he pleases—"Othello, beware of jealousy;" and then he proceeds to give a description of its baleful nature. What, now, is the attitude of the Moor? This is the very passion with which he knows himself to be affected. Never more can he harbor a doubt of Iago's honesty; for has not the latter warned him of his danger? Iago thus tears out and brings to the Moor's own look his deepest consciousness—his greatest peril. He knows the truth of the admonition. Iago now can proceed with

more certainty and directness ; he cannot be suspected of exciting jealousy, for this is the very thing against which he has given so potent a warning. Thus Othello is thrown on his own defense — is compelled to dissemble his true feelings ; thus he declares that he is not jealous, when he really is. He is forced into the necessity of disguise — exchanges positions with Iago ; yet the latter well knows, indeed says, that jealousy cannot be eradicated when once excited, but ever creates itself anew — feeds on its own meat. Such is the twofold purpose of Iago, as manifested in this dialogue — to inspire Othello with suspicion, and yet to shun suspicion himself.

Othello is caught ; the reason is manifest. A universally suspicious nature could not have been thus entrapped ; it must have suspected the purpose of Iago also, with all his adroitness. Othello is, however, naturally unsuspecting. But guilt has furnished the most fruitful soil for one kind of suspicion ; that soil Iago cultivates. Hence the Moor is afraid of only one thing — the infidelity of his wife ; the tricks of Iago lie outside of the horizon of his suspicion. On the other hand, a completely innocent nature could not have been thus entrapped ; the psychological basis would be wholly wanting. Here is seen the reason for the marked outlines of Othello's character. He is not naturally suspicious, otherwise he must have suspected the purpose of Iago ; nor is he guiltless, for, if he were, his jealousy could not have been reached by any such artifice.

Nothing can be more impressive and instructive than the contemplation of this mental development. It is most clearly shown that man's deed becomes forever a part of his being — that he can never free himself from its

effects upon his own disposition. The deed does not fly away into the past and lose itself in vacuity after it is done, but sinks into the deepest consciousness of the doer, and gives coloring to his future conduct. The negative wicked act must cast its dark shadow upon the soul, and thus change the character of the individual, whereby he is prepared for punishment. In the case of Othello we shudder at the manner in which guilt finds the most subtle avenues for returning upon the doer. The deed may be secret to the gaze of the world, but it sinks deep into the mind; this is altered, and retribution will follow. Such a portraiture is worth, to a rational being, all the insipid moralizing of ages.

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The passion has overwhelmed him; he cannot do or think of anything else; his occupation is gone. So Iago knows; not all the drowsy medicines of the world will restore to him peace of mind. Iago, indeed, has obtained his knowledge from experience; in fact, his own present activity has the same root. For a moment Othello reacts, suspects; notices that no positive proofs have been produced—only surmises. He turns upon Iago and grasps him by the throat; yet, how can he continue his suspicion; how can he blame Iago? Did not the latter warn him of these very consequences? One word from his Ancient, therefore, makes him release his hold. Othello must believe that Iago has been honest with him. Once more Iago speaks of his jealousy; it is a thought that cuts the Moor through and through, whose truth he can not deny. .

tion. How was it possible to excite such a passion in a character like that of Othello? The free, open, unsuspecting nature of the Moor is noted by Iago himself; his noble and heroic disposition would appear least likely to be subject to jealousy. Yet this is the very form of revenge chosen by Iago with surpassing skill. This is, therefore, just the weak side of Othello's character. Why? The solution of the problem lies in the fact above mentioned — that Iago's suspicion concerning Emilia is true. Othello has been guilty of adultery; he is, therefore, aware that the infidelity of wives is a fact. Here lies the germ of his belief in the faithlessness of Desdemona. His own act thus comes home to him and renders him accursed; his faith in justice can only make him more ready to think that he will be punished through his wife, since that is the mode which his own guilt suggests. Such is the initial point of the fearful jealousy of the Moor, which Iago knows exactly how to reach, since it is a matter lying wholly within his own experience; and he knows also that Othello, on account of previous criminality, must be as capable of this passion as himself. Both the revenge of Iago and the jealousy of Othello, therefore, can be adequately motivated only by the guilty conduct of the Moor towards the Ancient's wife.

Moreover, there is no other ground for the relation of marriage between Iago and Emilia except as a basis for these two main motives of drama. Thus, too, we see one of the fundamental rules of Shakespeare vindicated — that man cannot escape his own deed; hence Othello is the author of his own fate, since by his guilt he has called up the avenger who will destroy him and his family, while, without the view above developed, he must appear as an

innocent sufferer deceived by a malicious villain. It will, therefore, be seen that two things of the greatest importance have their sole explanation in this view, namely, the manner of Iago's revenge, and his knowledge of the assailable point in Othello's character. Here also we find the solution of the Moor's contradictory nature. He is, in general, unsuspecting; but, on account of his guilt, he is capable of one suspicion, namely, that wives may be faithless. The Poet has thus added to the distinction of race—for which the Moor could not be blamed—a second motive, the criminal deed, of which he must take the responsibility. The military life of Othello will furnish the third principle—that of honor, which will impel him to destroy the wife whom he thinks to have violated it in its deepest and most tender part.

1. (*a.*) The plan of Iago, and the grounds upon which it reposes, have now been unfolded. The next task before us is to scan with care the instruments which he employs to effect his purpose. The first one is Roderigo, who stands in a wholly external relation to the main action, and is always introduced from the outside for some violent purpose. He is twice turned against Cassio, and is continually directed by the hand of Iago. His unholy pursuit has also brought him to Cyprus, where he is still fed with hope, and relieved of his money, by the artful Ancient. But he becomes very impatient; he is always angry at his first appearance in the scene, yet a few words from Iago fill him again with great expectations. It is curious what a predominating influence Iago's superior intelligence has over him. When alone, he knows that he is robbed and deceived; he even resolves to go home after giving Iago a good tongue-lashing. But he always

yields, even against his own judgment; he cannot resist the plausibility and flattery of the Ancient, and he twice exposes, and finally loses, his life in his foolish and unrighteous enterprise.

The second, and by all means the most important, instrument in the hands of Iago is the Lieutenant, Cassio. This man is in every way adapted for exciting Othello's jealousy. He is on intimate terms with Desdemona; he is fair in external appearance, gifted with the graces of deportment, and his youthful face stands in marked contrast to the older look of Othello. Modern parlance would call him a ladies' man. But the decisive fact in his portraiture is that he is an open, notorious libertine. Iago himself has reason to suspect him, too, of undue intimacy with Emilia. This suspicion—in itself by no means so improbable, on account of her character—is, however, not confirmed in other parts of the play. But, to remove all doubt concerning Cassio's moral weaknesses, the Poet has introduced a special person, the courtesan, Bianca. There is no other ground why such an offensive relation should be dragged into the drama. Cassio has been long acquainted with Othello, who, therefore, must have known his private habits. Cassio, it is manifest, is in every way a fit subject for suspicion, on account of his character, his external appearance, and his relation to Desdemona.

Already Iago has observed a familiarity—a little indiscreet, yet entirely innocent—between the Lieutenant and Desdemona. But Iago can do nothing unless he can bring about a total separation between Cassio and Othello, so that they will not communicate together. This, then, he proceeds to accomplish, thus destroying all opportunities for explanation, and giving occasion for the intercession

of Desdemona. The dark plan of Iago is wonderfully carried out; he holds and directs Cassio with one hand and Othello with the other, yet neither knows what is controlling him. The drunken brawl causes the Lieutenant to be dismissed. Roderigo here is made the external means. Dissimulation could not be more complete. Iago has three disguises; he makes three men, Roderigo, Cassio, and Othello, believe that he is working in their interest, yet is at the same time ruining them all. He hopes also to get Cassio's place, though the main motive is to wreak revenge upon Othello, of which Cassio is a convenient instrument. Ambition is not his deepest impelling power, but revenge.

At this point we behold the supreme phase of Iago's characterization: It is his confession that he is a villain. The form of the soliloquy again appears, in which he expresses his deepest convictions. He knows that he is involving the innocent and the guilty in one common destruction; he acknowledges that he is a devil clothed in his blackest sins—that is, Iago is entirely conscious of the nature of his deed, and does not try to conceal it from himself. He at first indulges in an ironical defense of the advice which he gives to Cassio for recovering the Moor's favor; in appearance it is the best possible counsel, but it is counteracted and turned into the most deadly poison by his own dark insinuations to Othello. Such a defense, however, is the divinity of Hell, from whose sophisms his mind, at least, is free. It is thus his great boast that his intelligence is not caught in the meshes of deceptive casuistry. He does not seriously try to defend his action; still, he will have his revenge. Iago is the self-conscious villain. He knows that he is overthrowing

the moral world, as far as his conduct goes; yet it must perish, since it stands in his way. There is no excusing of himself, no palliation of the deed.

"When devils will their blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now."

How complete the consciousness, and how audacious the statement, of his own character! It has been said that Iago deceives himself with his display of motives; that he persuaded himself to believe a falsehood, in his accusation of Othello. This soliloquy ought to banish forever such an opinion. No man ever knew his own mind better than Iago. Here it is seen that he clearly comprehends and acknowledges the nature of his deed. He is aware that every man is a villain who does what he is doing. However deserved may be his revenge upon Othello, he can have no justification for ruining Cassio and Desdemona, and resorting to the means which he now employs.

The third instrument of Iago is Emilia, his wife, who is the devoted attendant of Desdemona, and is employed by the latter in her communication with the cashiered Lieutenant. Iago thus has a means of obtaining information concerning their plans. Desdemona is now set to interceding for Cassio; she is urged on by both Emilia and Cassio, who are in their turn directed by Iago. This part of the plan easily succeeds.

1. (b.) Such are the instruments; but Iago himself has to manage the far more difficult case of Othello in his relation to his wife, Desdemona. This brings us now to the main development of the drama, and, perhaps, the

most complete psychological portraiture in Shakespeare. Iago begins the manipulation of Othello's mind through a series of influences adapted exactly to the shifting phases of the Moor's disposition, and increasing in intensity to the end. Given a noble, unsuspecting character, the design is to portray those causes which not only turn it into the opposite of itself, but make it destroy its most beloved object. The primal basis to work upon lies in Othello's own consciousness of guilt. The first point is to faintly touch his suspicion, which is accomplished most easily, for he readily imagines what he himself has done to others may happen in his own case. We see how the slightest hint from Iago casts a shadow over his whole being.

Iago. — Ha! I like not that.

Othello. — What dost thou say?

Iago. — Nothing my lord, or if — I know not what.

Othello. — Was not that Cassio parted from my wife? etc.

A word from Desdemona is sufficient, however, to allay his mistrust, but another word from Iago is sufficient to arouse it anew in all its intensity. Can any one doubt that this hasty suspicion, on the part of an unsuspecting character, can have any other ground than the consciousness of the same kind of guilt which he is so ready to suspect in another? Iago's artifices are unquestionably skillful, but he found a most fruitful and well-prepared soil; and, besides, his very skillfulness rests upon his comprehending and utilizing so thoroughly the psychological effects of Othello's crime. It is impossible to think that an honest and innocent man could have been so easily led astray.

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difficulty of Iago's task is proportionately greater. How will the latter prevent that suspicion from becoming universal—from being directed against himself as well as against Cassio and Desdemona? His first plan, therefore, must be to confirm his own honesty in the mind of Othello with the same care and skill that he infuses distrust against the other two. He has to fill the Moor with suspicion, and, at the same time, to avoid the suspicion of doing that very thing.

It is this double, and apparently contradictory, ability that gives such a lofty idea of Iago's intellectual power. But how does he proceed to accomplish his purpose? At first, by the apparent unwillingness with which he tells his dark surmises, and by the pretended dislike with which he assails the reputation of people. In these cases he seems to manifest the most tender regard for the rights and character of others; indeed, he repeatedly confesses his own tendency to suspect wrongfully. Such a man appears to be absolutely just—more just, indeed, to others than to himself. But all these things might be the tricks of a false, disloyal knave, as Othello well knows and says. Now comes Iago's master-stroke, by which he completely spans the Moor's mind, and turns it in whatever direction he pleases—"Othello, beware of jealousy;" and then he proceeds to give a description of its baleful nature. What, now, is the attitude of the Moor? This is the very passion with which he knows himself to be affected. Never more can he harbor a doubt of Iago's honesty; for has not the latter warned him of his danger? Iago thus tears out and brings to the Moor's own look his deepest consciousness—his greatest peril. He knows the truth of the admonition. Iago now can proceed with

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✓ Othello will have more direct proofs than surmise ; Iago is ready with them. He then narrates the dream of Cassio, which Othello, of course, has no means of verifying. But the charge is direct, plain, and based upon an occurrence. Next comes the apparently complete demonstration—the handkerchief. Here is a fact which Othello does verify sufficiently to discover that Desdemona has not the article sought for in her possession. Still, whether Cassio has received it or not he cannot verify as long as they are asunder. Finally, the trick wherein Othello overhears the conversation about Bianca, and thinks it is about Desdemona, seems to him to be an acknowledgment of guilt from the mouth of Cassio himself. It ought to be added that, before this, Iago has made the direct charge that Cassio has revealed to him Desdemona's infidelity. Othello is so overcome that he falls into a swoon, and then afterward, through the words of the Lieutenant, he seems to get a complete confirmation of Iago's statement. Othello is now resolved ; his mad suspicion has been wrought up to the point where no explanations can mitigate its ferocity. He investigates, but his resolution is already taken. No declaration of Emilia, whose character he cannot trust, and no denials of Desdemona, who is the person suspected, can shake his belief. The passion has taken too deep a hold ; he will not, and can not, withdraw himself from its grasp. The plan of Iago has reached its climax. He began with faint surmise, he proceeded to direct assertions, and lastly he gives what seems to be a demonstration to the senses.

Two persons, Emilia and Cassio, have now revealed themselves fully, and we are enabled to ascertain their function in the play. In regard to Emilia, she makes no

pretense to virtue as her principle in life ; indeed, she quite acknowledges her own infidelity. We have already seen with what contempt she was treated by her husband ; in her character and declarations is found a complete justification of his suspicion, though she naturally denies to him the truth of the charge. Previously she was submissive, but now she requites his disrespect in full measure ; she also intimates that he is untrue to the marriage relation. This ill-starred couple, therefore, have already passed through the experience of Othello and Desdemona, and both show that they are well acquainted with all the manifestations of jealousy.

But her most peculiar trait is her insight into the whole spiritual net-work of Iago's plans ; she thus is an explanation of her husband to a certain extent. In the first place, she at once comprehends the exact nature of Othello's passion ; she declares that her inference is from the similar behavior of Iago. Secondly, she sees that some person has excited the Moor's jealousy ; it could not have arisen of itself in his bosom. Thirdly, she is certain that Iago is this person, though she does not say so openly, and she gives him several secret thrusts. The motives which impelled Iago, and the grounds upon which he based his success, appear to be distinctly apprehended by this strange, shrewd woman, whose redeeming traits are her devotion to Desdemona, and her courageous defense of innocence.

Cassio has always fared well, receiving the greatest praise from even ministerial critics, notwithstanding his scandalous relation to Bianca. It is hard to tell why he has been so lauded, unless the reason be found in the temperance speech which he makes after being cashiered

for getting drunk. Soberness is apt to bring such repentance, along with resolutions to reform. He also laments the loss of reputation, by which he clearly does not mean reputation for morality and decency, but the empty bauble of military glory. It is true that he is a favorite of the simple-hearted Desdemona, but, on account of his character, he is employed as the instrument of her destruction.

III. The third movement of the play, the Retribution, follows. The tragic preparation of the previous portions is carried to the consummation. First, Roderigo is led to assail Cassio, but is slain by Iago. It is his just desert, for he has willed, and tried to accomplish, both adultery and murder. Desdemona is killed by the Moor; jealousy has done its worst—has slain its most beloved object. The ground for her fate has been already stated. She violated the conditions of the Family in marrying a husband of a different race. Othello himself feels that she has shocked the strongest instincts of nature by her conduct; hence he can easily be brought to believe her untrue. That is, jealousy is sure to arise under such circumstances. It cannot be her disregard of the parental will which brings on her tragic fate. The second and subordinate motive of Othello's jealousy, namely, his previous incontinence, can, of course, have nothing to do with the guilt of Desdemona. That has its baleful effect upon his character, as has already been shown; it brings upon him a fearful retribution, and determines the method of Iago's revenge. Still, a man may be fired with jealousy and yet may not be ready to destroy its object. A third element, therefore, is added to Othello's character—honor. It is intimately connected with his military life. The soldier always pre-

fers death to what he deems dishonor; he would rather destroy the dearest object in existence, and be destroyed himself, than be stained with disgrace. Hence, when Othello is convinced of Desdemona's guilt, he must proceed to kill her.

Iago is unmasked. The whole breadth of his wicked plan is exposed, mainly by his wife Emilia. It has been before noted how completely she fathomed the design of her husband; she is, indeed, the reflection of his spiritual nature. Now she glances through the entire scheme of villainy. Iago knows her sharp insight; he tries to stop her speech, but, when he cannot, stabs her. The truth flashes upon the mind of Othello. He is ready to practice upon himself that severe justice which he imagined that he was employing against others. Honor, too, will no longer permit him to live. As he once slew a Turk who traduced the State, so now he will slay himself who has acted so as to deserve the same fate. There seems some design of the Poet in one incident; Othello attempts, but is not permitted, to slay Iago. The latter has really suffered a greater injury from the Moor than he has inflicted; he cannot, therefore, receive his punishment from the hands of Othello.

This tragedy deals essentially with one relation of the Family—that of husband and wife—though the father of Desdemona appears for a short time. There are three pairs, whose function is to represent in regular gradation negative phases of marriage. First come Othello and Desdemona, a unity resting on love and fidelity, but which is, nevertheless, contrary to a necessary condition of the Family. Hence their tie is disrupted, and both perish. The second couple is Iago and Emilia, who are married, but have no emotional basis for their union; both are cer-

tainly wanting in love, and both are probably wanting in fidelity. They, too, are destroyed. The third pair is Cassio and Bianca, who are unmarried, but still represent the purely sensual relation of the sexes in its hostility to the possible existence of the Family. They both are preserved; the Poet would seem to indicate that they had committed no tragic violation of an institution which they had never entered. Then there are various cross-relations of these individuals, which give other negative phases of married life, as that of Othello and Emilia. The peculiar attitude of Roderigo towards Desdemona must also be classed as one of these manifestations. In general, the conjugal bond of the Family has here its various collisions portrayed, and this drama may, therefore, be named the Tragedy of Husband and Wife.

KING LEAR.

The impression left upon the mind by this drama is that of terrific grandeur. In it is found, probably, the strongest language ever written or spoken by a human being. Dante has passages of fiery intensity, Æschylus has strains of wonderful sublimity, but nothing in either of these poets is equal to the awful imprecations of Lear. The grand characteristic of the play is strength—Titanic strength—which can only be adequately compared to the mightiest forces of Nature. There is a world-destroying element in it which oppresses the individual and makes him feel like fleeing from the crash of the Universe. The superhuman power, passion, and expression can only be symbolized by the tempest or volcano; it is, indeed, the modern battle of the Giants and the Gods. Shakespeare, like other poets, seems to have had his Titanic epoch, and his *King Lear* may be well called the most colossal specimen of literary Titanism.

It will be noticed that the action of the play lies in the sphere of the Family, and portrays one of its essential relations—that of parents and children. The conflicts arising from this relation involve also brothers and sisters in strife. The domestic side of life is thus torn with fearful struggles, and its quiet affection and repose are turned into a display of malignant hate and passion. Each element is present. There is on the one hand the most heroic fidelity, and on the other the most wanton infidelity

the moral world, as far as his conduct goes; yet it must perish, since it stands in his way. There is no excusing of himself, no palliation of the deed.

"When devils will their blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now."

How complete the consciousness, and how audacious the statement, of his own character! It has been said that Iago deceives himself with his display of motives; that he persuaded himself to believe a falsehood, in his accusation of Othello. This soliloquy ought to banish forever such an opinion. No man ever knew his own mind better than Iago. Here it is seen that he clearly comprehends and acknowledges the nature of his deed. He is aware that every man is a villain who does what he is doing. However deserved may be his revenge upon Othello, he can have no justification for ruining Cassio and Desdemona, and resorting to the means which he now employs.

The third instrument of Iago is Emilia, his wife, who is the devoted attendant of Desdemona, and is employed by the latter in her communication with the cashiered Lieutenant. Iago thus has a means of obtaining information concerning their plans. Desdemona is now set to interceding for Cassio; she is urged on by both Emilia and Cassio, who are in their turn directed by Iago. This part of the plan easily succeeds.

1. (b.) Such are the instruments; but Iago himself has to manage the far more difficult case of Othello in his relation to his wife, Desdemona. This brings us now to the main development of the drama, and, perhaps, the

most complete psychological portraiture in Shakespeare. Iago begins the manipulation of Othello's mind through a series of influences adapted exactly to the shifting phases of the Moor's disposition, and increasing in intensity to the end. Given a noble, unsuspecting character, the design is to portray those causes which not only turn it into the opposite of itself, but make it destroy its most beloved object. The primal basis to work upon lies in Othello's own consciousness of guilt. The first point is to faintly touch his suspicion, which is accomplished most easily, for he readily imagines what he himself has done to others may happen in his own case. We see how the slightest hint from Iago casts a shadow over his whole being.

Iago. — Ha! I like not that.

Othello. — What dost thou say?

Iago. — Nothing my lord, or if — I know not what.

Othello. — Was not that Cassio parted from my wife? etc.

A word from Desdemona is sufficient, however, to allay his mistrust, but another word from Iago is sufficient to arouse it anew in all its intensity. Can any one doubt that this hasty suspicion, on the part of an unsuspecting character, can have any other ground than the consciousness of the same kind of guilt which he is so ready to suspect in another? Iago's artifices are unquestionably skillful, but he found a most fruitful and well-prepared soil; and, besides, his very skillfulness rests upon his comprehending and utilizing so thoroughly the psychological effects of Othello's crime. It is impossible to think that an honest and innocent man could have been so easily led astray.

Othello's suspicion is now fully aroused, but with it the

difficulty of Iago's task is proportionately greater. How will the latter prevent that suspicion from becoming universal—from being directed against himself as well as against Cassio and Desdemona? His first plan, therefore, must be to confirm his own honesty in the mind of Othello with the same care and skill that he infuses distrust against the other two. He has to fill the Moor with suspicion, and, at the same time, to avoid the suspicion of doing that very thing.

It is this double, and apparently contradictory, ability that gives such a lofty idea of Iago's intellectual power. But how does he proceed to accomplish his purpose? At first, by the apparent unwillingness with which he tells his dark surmises, and by the pretended dislike with which he assails the reputation of people. In these cases he seems to manifest the most tender regard for the rights and character of others; indeed, he repeatedly confesses his own tendency to suspect wrongfully. Such a man appears to be absolutely just—more just, indeed, to others than to himself. But all these things might be the tricks of a false, disloyal knave, as Othello well knows and says. Now comes Iago's master-stroke, by which he completely spans the Moor's mind, and turns it in whatever direction he pleases—"Othello, beware of jealousy;" and then he proceeds to give a description of its baleful nature. What, now, is the attitude of the Moor? This is the very passion with which he knows himself to be affected. Never more can he harbor a doubt of Iago's honesty; for has not the latter warned him of his danger? Iago thus tears out and brings to the Moor's own look his deepest consciousness—his greatest peril. He knows the truth of the admonition. Iago now can proceed with

more certainty and directness ; he cannot be suspected of exciting jealousy, for this is the very thing against which he has given so potent a warning. Thus Othello is thrown on his own defense — is compelled to dissemble his true feelings ; thus he declares that he is not jealous, when he really is. He is forced into the necessity of disguise — exchanges positions with Iago ; yet the latter well knows, indeed says, that jealousy cannot be eradicated when once excited, but ever creates itself anew — feeds on its own meat. Such is the twofold purpose of Iago, as manifested in this dialogue — to inspire Othello with suspicion, and yet to shun suspicion himself.

Othello is caught ; the reason is manifest. A universally suspicious nature could not have been thus entrapped ; it must have suspected the purpose of Iago also, with all his adroitness. Othello is, however, naturally unsuspecting. But guilt has furnished the most fruitful soil for one kind of suspicion ; that soil Iago cultivates. Hence the Moor is afraid of only one thing — the infidelity of his wife ; the tricks of Iago lie outside of the horizon of his suspicion. On the other hand, a completely innocent nature could not have been thus entrapped ; the psychological basis would be wholly wanting. Here is seen the reason for the marked outlines of Othello's character. He is not naturally suspicious, otherwise he must have suspected the purpose of Iago ; nor is he guiltless, for, if he were, his jealousy could not have been reached by any such artifice.

Nothing can be more impressive and instructive than the contemplation of this mental development. It is most clearly shown that man's deed becomes forever a part of his being — that he can never free himself from its

effects upon his own disposition. The deed does not fly away into the past and lose itself in vacuity after it is done, but sinks into the deepest consciousness of the doer, and gives coloring to his future conduct. The negative wicked act must cast its dark shadow upon the soul, and thus change the character of the individual, whereby he is prepared for punishment. In the case of Othello we shudder at the manner in which guilt finds the most subtle avenues for returning upon the doer. The deed may be secret to the gaze of the world, but it sinks deep into the mind; this is altered, and retribution will follow. Such a portraiture is worth, to a rational being, all the insipid moralizing of ages.

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But her most peculiar trait is her insight into the whole spiritual net-work of Iago's plans ; she thus is an explanation of her husband to a certain extent. In the first place, she at once comprehends the exact nature of Othello's passion ; she declares that her inference is from the similar behavior of Iago. Secondly, she sees that some person has excited the Moor's jealousy ; it could not have arisen of itself in his bosom. Thirdly, she is certain that Iago is this person, though she does not say so openly, and she gives him several secret thrusts. The motives which impelled Iago, and the grounds upon which he based his success, appear to be distinctly apprehended by this strange, shrewd woman, whose redeeming traits are her devotion to Desdemona, and her courageous defense of innocence.

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III. The third movement of the play, the Retribution, follows. The tragic preparation of the previous portions is carried to the consummation. First, Roderigo is led to assail Cassio, but is slain by Iago. It is his just desert, for he has willed, and tried to accomplish, both adultery and murder. Desdemona is killed by the Moor; jealousy has done its worst—has slain its most beloved object. The ground for her fate has been already stated. She violated the conditions of the Family in marrying a husband of a different race. Othello himself feels that she has shocked the strongest instincts of nature by her conduct; hence he can easily be brought to believe her untrue. That is, jealousy is sure to arise under such circumstances. It cannot be her disregard of the parental will which brings on her tragic fate. The second and subordinate motive of Othello's jealousy, namely, his previous incontinence, can, of course, have nothing to do with the guilt of Desdemona. That has its baleful effect upon his character, as has already been shown; it brings upon him a fearful retribution, and determines the method of Iago's revenge. Still, a man may be fired with jealousy and yet may not be ready to destroy its object. A third element, therefore, is added to Othello's character—honor. It is intimately connected with his military life. The soldier always pre-

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The passion has overwhelmed him; he cannot do or think of anything else; his occupation is gone. So Iago knows; not all the drowsy medicines of the world will restore to him peace of mind. Iago, indeed, has obtained his knowledge from experience; in fact, his own present activity has the same root. For a moment Othello reacts, suspects; notices that no positive proofs have been produced—only surmises. He turns upon Iago and grasps him by the throat; yet, how can he continue his suspicion; how can he blame Iago? Did not the latter warn him of these very consequences? One word from his Ancient, therefore, makes him release his hold. Othello must believe that Iago has been honest with him. Once more Iago speaks of his jealousy; it is a thought that cuts the Moor through and through, whose truth he can not deny.

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tainly wanting in love, and both are probably wanting in fidelity. They, too, are destroyed. The third pair is Cassio and Bianca, who are unmarried, but still represent the purely sensual relation of the sexes in its hostility to the possible existence of the Family. They both are preserved; the Poet would seem to indicate that they had committed no tragic violation of an institution which they had never entered. Then there are various cross-relations of these individuals, which give other negative phases of married life, as that of Othello and Emilia. The peculiar attitude of Roderigo towards Desdemona must also be classed as one of these manifestations. In general, the conjugal bond of the Family has here its various collisions portrayed, and this drama may, therefore, be named the Tragedy of Husband and Wife.

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Iago can now be more bold; Othello cannot suspect him. Hitherto he has directed his hints and surmises against Cassio; but now he begins to assail Desdemona with the most artful innuendoes. She is from Venice, where it is the custom to be untrue. She deceived her father; you know she pretended in his presence to tremble at your looks when she loved you most—a statement which has increased force from the parting admonition of Brabantio: “Moor, she has deceived her father, and may thee.” As preparatory to the final and culminating charge, Iago renews his warning against jealousy. But this third point the Moor anticipates, so well prepared has he been, and thus shows that it was always in his mind. It is the distinction of race. Hardly is it hinted by him, when Iago catches up the unfinished thought and dwells upon it with terrific emphasis. How unnatural, horrible, the union between man and woman of different complexion and clime! and hence how much more ready will she be to break it, after becoming disgusted! We see with what effect this reproach

takes hold of Othello in his succeeding soliloquy. It recalls all the bitterness of many years, the taunts of Brabantio, finally the collision resting upon this very basis, which collision he has just passed through. Desdemona broke over all social distinctions of nation and race; here is the retribution—wanton jealousy. The greater her sacrifice the more unnatural does it seem, and the more suspected she becomes. Moreover, we catch a glimpse of that to which this jealousy will lead—destruction for himself and for the loved one rather than be dishonored in his domestic life. The passion of jealousy rests upon the monogamic nature of marriage; when that relation is disturbed, jealousy will, and ought to, arise in all its intensity. Another element is added in the case of Othello, springing from his military career—honor. He cannot endure shame and reproach—he who has never had any taint cast upon his courage or reputation.

The passion has overwhelmed him; he cannot do or think of anything else; his occupation is gone. So Iago knows; not all the drowsy medicines of the world will restore to him peace of mind. Iago, indeed, has obtained his knowledge from experience; in fact, his own present activity has the same root. For a moment Othello reacts, suspects; notices that no positive proofs have been produced—only surmises. He turns upon Iago and grasps him by the throat; yet, how can he continue his suspicion; how can he blame Iago? Did not the latter warn him of these very consequences? One word from his Ancient, therefore, makes him release his hold. Othello must believe that Iago has been honest with him. Once more Iago speaks of his jealousy; it is a thought that cuts the Moor through and through, whose truth he can not deny.

✓ Othello will have more direct proofs than surmise ; Iago is ready with them. He then narrates the dream of Cassio, which Othello, of course, has no means of verifying. But the charge is direct, plain, and based upon an occurrence. Next comes the apparently complete demonstration—the handkerchief. Here is a fact which Othello does verify sufficiently to discover that Desdemona has not the article sought for in her possession. Still, whether Cassio has received it or not he cannot verify as long as they are asunder. Finally, the trick wherein Othello overhears the conversation about Bianca, and thinks it is about Desdemona, seems to him to be an acknowledgment of guilt from the mouth of Cassio himself. It ought to be added that, before this, Iago has made the direct charge that Cassio has revealed to him Desdemona's infidelity. Othello is so overcome that he falls into a swoon, and then afterward, through the words of the Lieutenant, he seems to get a complete confirmation of Iago's statement. Othello is now resolved ; his mad suspicion has been wrought up to the point where no explanations can mitigate its ferocity. He investigates, but his resolution is already taken. No declaration of Emilia, whose character he cannot trust, and no denials of Desdemona, who is the person suspected, can shake his belief. The passion has taken too deep a hold ; he will not, and can not, withdraw himself from its grasp. The plan of Iago has reached its climax. He began with faint surmise, he proceeded to direct assertions, and lastly he gives what seems to be a demonstration to the senses.

Two persons, Emilia and Cassio, have now revealed themselves fully, and we are enabled to ascertain their function in the play. In regard to Emilia, she makes no

pretense to virtue as her principle in life ; indeed, she quite acknowledges her own infidelity. We have already seen with what contempt she was treated by her husband ; in her character and declarations is found a complete justification of his suspicion, though she naturally denies to him the truth of the charge. Previously she was submissive, but now she requites his disrespect in full measure ; she also intimates that he is untrue to the marriage relation. This ill-starred couple, therefore, have already passed through the experience of Othello and Desdemona, and both show that they are well acquainted with all the manifestations of jealousy.

But her most peculiar trait is her insight into the whole spiritual net-work of Iago's plans ; she thus is an explanation of her husband to a certain extent. In the first place, she at once comprehends the exact nature of Othello's passion ; she declares that her inference is from the similar behavior of Iago. Secondly, she sees that some person has excited the Moor's jealousy ; it could not have arisen of itself in his bosom. Thirdly, she is certain that Iago is this person, though she does not say so openly, and she gives him several secret thrusts. The motives which impelled Iago, and the grounds upon which he based his success, appear to be distinctly apprehended by this strange, shrewd woman, whose redeeming traits are her devotion to Desdemona, and her courageous defense of innocence.

Cassio has always fared well, receiving the greatest praise from even ministerial critics, notwithstanding his scandalous relation to Bianca. It is hard to tell why he has been so lauded, unless the reason be found in the temperance speech which he makes after being cashiered

for getting drunk. Soberness is apt to bring such repentance, along with resolutions to reform. He also laments the loss of reputation, by which he clearly does not mean reputation for morality and decency, but the empty bauble of military glory. It is true that he is a favorite of the simple-hearted Desdemona, but, on account of his character, he is employed as the instrument of her destruction.

III. The third movement of the play, the Retribution, follows. The tragic preparation of the previous portions is carried to the consummation. First, Roderigo is led to assail Cassio, but is slain by Iago. It is his just desert, for he has willed, and tried to accomplish, both adultery and murder. Desdemona is killed by the Moor; jealousy has done its worst—has slain its most beloved object. The ground for her fate has been already stated. She violated the conditions of the Family in marrying a husband of a different race. Othello himself feels that she has shocked the strongest instincts of nature by her conduct; hence he can easily be brought to believe her untrue. That is, jealousy is sure to arise under such circumstances. It cannot be her disregard of the parental will which brings on her tragic fate. The second and subordinate motive of Othello's jealousy, namely, his previous incontinence, can, of course, have nothing to do with the guilt of Desdemona. That has its baleful effect upon his character, as has already been shown; it brings upon him a fearful retribution, and determines the method of Iago's revenge. Still, a man may be fired with jealousy and yet may not be ready to destroy its object. A third element, therefore, is added to Othello's character—honor. It is intimately connected with his military life. The soldier always pre-

fers death to what he deems dishonor; he would rather destroy the dearest object in existence, and be destroyed himself, than be stained with disgrace. Hence, when Othello is convinced of Desdemona's guilt, he must proceed to kill her.

Iago is unmasked. The whole breadth of his wicked plan is exposed, mainly by his wife Emilia. It has been before noted how completely she fathomed the design of her husband; she is, indeed, the reflection of his spiritual nature. Now she glances through the entire scheme of villainy. Iago knows her sharp insight; he tries to stop her speech, but, when he cannot, stabs her. The truth flashes upon the mind of Othello. He is ready to practice upon himself that severe justice which he imagined that he was employing against others. Honor, too, will no longer permit him to live. As he once slew a Turk who traduced the State, so now he will slay himself who has acted so as to deserve the same fate. There seems some design of the Poet in one incident; Othello attempts, but is not permitted, to slay Iago. The latter has really suffered a greater injury from the Moor than he has inflicted; he cannot, therefore, receive his punishment from the hands of Othello.

This tragedy deals essentially with one relation of the Family—that of husband and wife—though the father of Desdemona appears for a short time. There are three pairs, whose function is to represent in regular gradation negative phases of marriage. First come Othello and Desdemona, a unity resting on love and fidelity, but which is, nevertheless, contrary to a necessary condition of the Family. Hence their tie is disrupted, and both perish. The second couple is Iago and Emilia, who are married, but have no emotional basis for their union; both are cer-

tainly wanting in love, and both are probably wanting in fidelity. They, too, are destroyed. The third pair is Cassio and Bianca, who are unmarried, but still represent the purely sensual relation of the sexes in its hostility to the possible existence of the Family. They both are preserved; the Poet would seem to indicate that they had committed no tragic violation of an institution which they had never entered. Then there are various cross-relations of these individuals, which give other negative phases of married life, as that of Othello and Emilia. The peculiar attitude of Roderigo towards Desdemona must also be classed as one of these manifestations. In general, the conjugal bond of the Family has here its various collisions portrayed, and this drama may, therefore, be named the Tragedy of Husband and Wife.

KING LEAR.

The impression left upon the mind by this drama is that of terrific grandeur. In it is found, probably, the strongest language ever written or spoken by a human being. Dante has passages of fiery intensity, Æschylus has strains of wonderful sublimity, but nothing in either of these poets is equal to the awful imprecations of Lear. The grand characteristic of the play is strength—Titanic strength—which can only be adequately compared to the mightiest forces of Nature. There is a world-destroying element in it which oppresses the individual and makes him feel like fleeing from the crash of the Universe. The superhuman power, passion, and expression can only be symbolized by the tempest or volcano; it is, indeed, the modern battle of the Giants and the Gods. Shakespeare, like other poets, seems to have had his Titanic epoch, and his *King Lear* may be well called the most colossal specimen of literary Titanism.

It will be noticed that the action of the play lies in the sphere of the Family, and portrays one of its essential relations—that of parents and children. The conflicts arising from this relation involve also brothers and sisters in strife. The domestic side of life is thus torn with fearful struggles, and its quiet affection and repose are turned into a display of malignant hate and passion. Each element is present. There is on the one hand the most heroic fidelity, and on the other the most wanton infidelity

The parents are both faithful and faithless to their relation; so are the children, taken collectively. Such are its contradictory principles, and hence arises the conflict in which the offending individuals perish, since they destroy the very condition of their own existence, namely, the Family. But those who have been true to their domestic relations, and have not otherwise committed wrong, are preserved. It is essentially the story of fidelity and infidelity to the Family.

The threads of the play are fundamentally two, which, however, unite, separate, and collide in various ways. The first thread is the family of Gloster, the second is the family of Lear, the attendants of each being included. Both threads have the same logical basis; the one can behold its features in the other — as it were, in a mirror; the drama gives a double reflection of the same content. Both fathers cause an utter disruption of their families by their mistakes and their passion; they drive off the faithful children and cherish the faithless ones; they are even ready to hand over to the latter their property and power. Both parents meet with a terrible punishment for the wrong done by them to their faithful children. But this punishment is received at the hands of their faithless children, who had obtained all the favors, and who thus, in turn, fall into guilt which will also be punished. There are, however, many differences of character, of situation, and of incident between the two threads. The one father has only daughters, the other has only sons; each relation, therefore, represents a distinct side of the Family. Lear is king, Gloster is subject; both taken together show that the conflict is not limited to one rank, but pervades the chief classes of society. Lear is irascible, Gloster is

superstitious; the result, however, is the same. Both groups indicate that it is the epoch of strife in the Family.

The two threads are sufficiently simple, but the psychological changes of character are far more difficult of comprehension. There will be touched almost every note in the gamut of the human mind from sanity to madness. Also, the grand transitions of the whole action must be carefully noted and accounted for, since everything is in a process — not only the individual, but also the entire group and the entire drama; as in life itself, each part moves and the totality moves. The development is that upon which the chief stress ought to be laid.

The general action of the play has essentially two movements, which pass into each other by the finest and most intricate net-work. There is in it a double guilt and a double retribution. The first movement (embracing mainly three Acts) exhibits the complete disintegration of the Family. It portrays the first guilt and the first retribution — the wrong of the parents and its punishment. Lear banishes his daughter; his daughters, in turn, drive him out of doors. Gloster expels from home, and disinherits, his true and faithful son in favor of the illegitimate and faithless son, and is then himself falsely accused and betrayed by the latter. Cordelia, too, falls into guilt in her attempt to avenge the wrongs of her father. Thus the disruption is complete — the parents expelled, the false triumphant, the faithful in disguise and banishment. Such is the first movement — the wrong done by the parents to their children, and its punishment. The second movement will unfold the second retribution, springing from the second guilt — the wrong done by the children to their parents, and its punishment. It must be observed, however,

that the deeds of the children which are portrayed in the first movement of the drama constitute their guilt. On the one hand they are instruments of retribution, but on the other hand their conduct is a violation of ethical principle, as deep as that of their parents. They are the avengers of guilt, but in this very act become themselves guilty, and must receive punishment. The general result, therefore, of the second movement will be the completed retribution. Lear and his three guilty daughters—for we have to include Cordelia under this category—as well as Gloster and his guilty son, perish. The faithful of both families come together, in their banishment, in order to protect their parents; thereby, however, Cordelia assails the established State. The consequence of her deed is death. The faithless of both families also come together; though they triumph in the external conflict, there necessarily arises a struggle among themselves—for how can the faithless be faithful to one another? The jealousy of the two sisters leads to a conspiracy, and to their final destruction. Edmund, faithless to both, falls at last by the hand of his brother, whom he has so deeply wronged.

This short analysis is intended as a sort of tabular statement to guide the reader through the various complications of the play. If the two distinctions of threads and movements which have been above unfolded are not carefully thought out, they may become a source of confusion, instead of a means of comprehension. Let it be borne in mind that the threads divide the drama lengthwise, while the movements of the action, as before explained, divide it crosswise. Each thread in each movement will be elaborated in proper order. But the notion must not be entertained that these distinctions are external and arbi-

trary; on the contrary, they are organic; they show the essential members of the whole, all of which should be logically connected.

I. 1. We shall accordingly take up the first thread and carry it through the first movement of the action. The play opens with the conversation of Gloster concerning his family relations. He speaks of his incontinence with light-hearted frivolity. The fruit of it is a grown-up son, who has come to visit his father after a long absence, but must be sent away again. That son hears his own shame from the lips of his indiscreet parent, and we can well imagine the bitterness in his heart, and his resolution to thwart his father's purpose. Here is indicated the crime of Gloster and the instrument of his retribution. He has committed the deepest wrong against the Family; he has called a social contradiction into existence, which it is impossible to heal. A son, and not a son; a child by nature, yet a child which the Family rejects, disowns, banishes, though it is the special function of the Family to rear and cherish the child. The wrong of Gloster is, therefore, double. He has wronged the Family, the conditions of whose existence he has trampled under foot, and, at the same time, made it the instrument of the direst injustice against an innocent being. But his wrong against his own child is still greater; it is a born outcast from the institutions of society. If guilt is ever requited at the hands of the injured, that father is bound to receive punishment from that son.

But here is the son speaking in his own person; let us see how he feels. He invokes Nature against the plague of custom, for by Nature he is, in every way, as good as his legitimate brother — indeed, he is better. Therefore

he will have his rights, particularly his share in the paternal patrimony, even if he assail and destroy everything high and holy in his attempt. His course and character are simply the logical result of his situation. He must turn against all institutions, for they have made him an outcast from society and deprived him of his estate. Yet it is from no fault of his own that he thus finds himself punished for crimes which he never committed. That which is called morality shuns him, scoffs at him, tramples him into the dust. All the safeguards which have been built up to protect the individual, as Family, State, Law, are turned to his degradation and destruction. The illegitimate child, therefore, is the natural villain — hostile to the Family, to Society, to Law, to Morality; in him institutions become contradictory of their purpose, and he must bear the sting of their wrong. Hence he worships Nature, for there alone he is the peer of all. He is thus not without adequate motives for his conduct; still, he is a villain, for such every man must be called who deliberately and persistently assails the ethical principles of the world; yet, if he follows these principles, they crush him. Edmund has taken his choice; he prefers honor and distinction through villainy, to shame and degradation through virtue. But still, the fatal outcome of his career, whatever may have been its cause, cannot be averted.

Edmund accordingly begins to work out his schemes. He turns against his legitimate brother, because the latter is the bearer of all those ethical elements which crush him. He turns against his father, who was the original author of the wrong—the evil consequences of which, however, the child must endure. Still, filial affection is his duty, under all circumstances; moreover, he has been

given an education, and is beloved, by his father. Here the theme can be seen to be the same as that of Lear—filial ingratitude and parental wrong. Edmund finds his father just in the mood to be successfully deceived, for the latter is excited over the occurrences at court, especially over the banishment of his friend Kent. It is the season of treachery, Gloster thinks, and the son proceeds to inject into his mind the deadly suspicion against the brother Edgar, and, at the same time, artfully conceals his own motives. Gloster is superstitious fundamentally; he sees in Nature, in the eclipses of the sun and moon, the collisions of the moral world; he is always ready to assign to blind physical causes the obliquities of man's action. By thus ignoring human freedom, he would seem to try to get rid of his own guilt. But Edmund is just the opposite in this respect; he does not believe in these external influences, but announces, in the boldest terms, the self-determination of man. He is the conscious villain, and takes upon himself the full responsibility of his own act. He, therefore, quickly perceives the weakness of his father, and uses it to his own advantage.

Equally well does he grasp and utilize the weak side of his brother Edgar's character, with whom he is next brought into contact. At first, however, he touches the same chord which lay so deep in the paternal nature, namely, superstition. But the plan does not work well. Edgar is not superstitious; but he is wholly unsuspecting. Accordingly he does what Edmund urges him to do—avoids his father. Both Edgar and Gloster have, therefore, credulity, and that, too, credulity of such magnitude that it requires some share of credulity in the reader to follow the Poet. But they reach it through different chan-

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Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand auspicious mistress ” —

Evidently the most startling words in the ear of old Gloster. Each is, therefore, wrought upon through his peculiar weakness. But we shall hereafter see that Edgar passes through a course of severe instruction, and learns something. From his present innocent state of mind he is to come to a knowledge of evil, in some of its varied manifestations.

The honest and faithful son has now been driven from home. The true and ethical relation of the Family has been annihilated by the faithless and immoral one. But that is not all ; Edgar is pursued as a murderer, is outlawed, and a price is set on his head. The institutions of society are invoked to destroy him. Though true to both, yet Family and State have turned against him in favor of one who is false to both. The ethical order of the world is reversed, just as was declared by Gloster himself ; and

yet he is the author of the present condition of things. But what is to become of poor Edgar? Without domestic, or even civil, protection, he has to flee, and in some way to avoid the oppression of society. He can only assume the meanest and most loathsome disguise, and wander over the country feigning both madness and beggary. For are not the institutions of man, through which alone personal security is possible, directed against him, and must he not get out of their reach? Still, he will remain faithful to his parent in spite of his wrongs, for fidelity is ever faithful. Nor will he go mad, like Lear, from his fall, though he descends from being a nobleman's son to the lowest depth of humiliation. Innocence, therefore, dares not show its face in this perverted world, but has to hide itself under the garb of insanity. Fidelity, too, must disguise itself from the clutches of the faithless.

The disruption of Gloster's family is now complete. That which the eclipses foreshadowed to him has come to pass—father against child, child against father; yet it was the consequence of his own innate disposition which was thus predicted, the presentiment of his own character. He had within himself the possibility of these events—that is what he saw in the stars. The signs of nature were to him an unavoidable fate, because they were simply the image of his deepest self. The Bastard is infinitely the intellectual superior of his father, for he believes in mind and relies upon thought. He knows that the individual is determined through himself. Hence comes his success, because he works through intelligence. But he, too, makes a mistake; he imagines his stand-point to be absolute, whereas it also is limited. He thinks that the world is moved solely through cunning; he, therefore,

ignores the eternal ethical laws of the universe. To employ the technical language of philosophy, his faith is in his own subjective intelligence alone, but the objective world of spirit he neither believes in nor cares for; he, therefore, collides with it, and perishes.

But the deepest stroke of villainous cunning is still to come. Edmund has succeeded in getting rid of the presence of his brother; now he must have the property of the family. His next scheme is, therefore, to work upon his father to this end. But here arises a great difficulty, which the intellectual rogue perfectly comprehends and carefully prepares for. While he is instilling suspicion, how is he to avoid suspicion himself? He is seeking his brother's patrimony by exciting mistrust; will he not be himself mistrusted of doing that very thing? This is the logical consequence of such conduct; a man who tries to arouse suspicion will be apt to be suspected; it is his own action returning upon him, for his principle is suspicion. Only the most adroit villain can make the synthesis of these two contradictory sides. Perhaps Gloucester is not hard to deceive; at any rate, Edmund succeeds admirably. His method is to declare openly the suspicion to which he is liable, and which is really true of him. Here is his language to his father:

"I threatened to discover him, he replied —
'Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal
Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee
Make thy words faithed? . . .
And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it.'"

"Edgar said that I would be suspected of plotting for his

inheritance, and, therefore, nobody would believe me." All suspicion is thus anticipated and destroyed in the mind of the father. Edmund appears to be the faithful son without property, and Edgar the faithless son with property. Gloster at once makes an adjustment; he says to Edmund—you shall have my estate. Edgar's offense is made to spring from his being heir; of the heirship he is, therefore, deprived.

The reader will notice that the crafty rogue announces here the very thing of which he is guilty; he *is* seeking the patrimony of his brother. Hypocrisy and falsehood are now carried to their climax; hypocrisy hypocritically condemns its own plan; falsehood falsely laments falsehood. Edmund declares his own nefarious scheme as something of which he might be suspected. Thus, however, he destroys suspicion. A careful concealment would be certain to arouse it; but, when a person finds his most secret misgivings openly announced by the one who is suspected, suspicion is apt to take its flight. Gloster might suspect that Edmund was deceiving him and trying to be his heir, but the latter puts this very suspicion into the mouth of Edgar as the ground of mistrust against himself. Thus its foundation is brushed away, for it is the nature of suspicion to rest upon its own secresy; let the villain destroy this secresy, and he is generally successful. Suspicion seems to take for granted that the motives of a scamp must always be hidden. To avoid suspicion means, usually, to be open, without concealment. The above-mentioned trait of Edmund, Shakespeare has given to other villains, notably to Iago. Villainy is full of the reproof of villainy, and thus seems honesty, which is just that which it is not, but it is still villainy.

he will have his rights, particularly his share in the paternal patrimony, even if he assail and destroy everything high and holy in his attempt. His course and character are simply the logical result of his situation. He must turn against all institutions, for they have made him an outcast from society and deprived him of his estate. Yet it is from no fault of his own that he thus finds himself punished for crimes which he never committed. That which is called morality shuns him, scoffs at him, tramples him into the dust. All the safeguards which have been built up to protect the individual, as Family, State, Law, are turned to his degradation and destruction. The illegitimate child, therefore, is the natural villain — hostile to the Family, to Society, to Law, to Morality; in him institutions become contradictory of their purpose, and he must bear the sting of their wrong. Hence he worships Nature, for there alone he is the peer of all. He is thus not without adequate motives for his conduct; still, he is a villain, for such every man must be called who deliberately and persistently assails the ethical principles of the world; yet, if he follows these principles, they crush him. Edmund has taken his choice; he prefers honor and distinction through villainy, to shame and degradation through virtue. But still, the fatal outcome of his career, whatever may have been its cause, cannot be averted.

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The disruption of Gloster's family is now complete. That which the eclipses foreshadowed to him has come to pass—father against child, child against father; yet it was the consequence of his own innate disposition which was thus predicted, the presentiment of his own character. He had within himself the possibility of these events—that is what he saw in the stars. The signs of nature were to him an unavoidable fate, because they were simply the image of his deepest self. The Bastard is infinitely the intellectual superior of his father, for he believes in mind and relies upon thought. He knows that the individual is determined through himself. Hence comes his success, because he works through intelligence. But he, too, makes a mistake; he imagines his stand-point to be absolute, whereas it also is limited. He thinks that the world is moved solely through cunning; he, therefore,

ignores the eternal ethical laws of the universe. To employ the technical language of philosophy, his faith is in his own subjective intelligence alone, but the objective world of spirit he neither believes in nor cares for; he, therefore, collides with it, and perishes.

But the deepest stroke of villainous cunning is still to come. Edmund has succeeded in getting rid of the presence of his brother; now he must have the property of the family. His next scheme is, therefore, to work upon his father to this end. But here arises a great difficulty, which the intellectual rogue perfectly comprehends and carefully prepares for. While he is instilling suspicion, how is he to avoid suspicion himself? He is seeking his brother's patrimony by exciting mistrust; will he not be himself mistrusted of doing that very thing? This is the logical consequence of such conduct; a man who tries to arouse suspicion will be apt to be suspected; it is his own action returning upon him, for his principle is suspicion. Only the most adroit villain can make the synthesis of these two contradictory sides. Perhaps Gloucester is not hard to deceive; at any rate, Edmund succeeds admirably. His method is to declare openly the suspicion to which he is liable, and which is really true of him. Here is his language to his father:

"I threatened to discover him, he replied —
'Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal
Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee
Make thy words faithed? . . .
And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it.'"

"Edgar said that I would be suspected of plotting for his

inheritance, and, therefore, nobody would believe me." All suspicion is thus anticipated and destroyed in the mind of the father. Edmund appears to be the faithful son without property, and Edgar the faithless son with property. Gloster at once makes an adjustment; he says to Edmund—you shall have my estate. Edgar's offense is made to spring from his being heir; of the heirship he is, therefore, deprived.

The reader will notice that the crafty rogue announces here the very thing of which he is guilty; he *is* seeking the patrimony of his brother. Hypocrisy and falsehood are now carried to their climax; hypocrisy hypocritically condemns its own plan; falsehood falsely laments falsehood. Edmund declares his own nefarious scheme as something of which he might be suspected. Thus, however, he destroys suspicion. A careful concealment would be certain to arouse it; but, when a person finds his most secret misgivings openly announced by the one who is suspected, suspicion is apt to take its flight. Gloster might suspect that Edmund was deceiving him and trying to be his heir, but the latter puts this very suspicion into the mouth of Edgar as the ground of mistrust against himself. Thus its foundation is brushed away, for it is the nature of suspicion to rest upon its own secrecy; let the villain destroy this secrecy, and he is generally successful. Suspicion seems to take for granted that the motives of a scamp must always be hidden. To avoid suspicion means, usually, to be open, without concealment. The above-mentioned trait of Edmund, Shakespeare has given to other villains, notably to Iago. Villainy is full of the reproof of villainy, and thus seems honesty, which is just that which it is not, but it is still villainy.

Still, Edmund is not satisfied ; he is not willing to quietly wait for the succession, but his father must be got rid of too. Gloster sympathized deeply with Lear, and, therefore, incurred the enmity of the ruling powers. He has received by letter information of the invasion of Cordelia ; his leaning is decidedly toward her party. He expresses this inclination, and also imparts the news which he has received to the son whom he supposed to be faithful. The son at once betrays his father, and is made Earl of Gloster. Edmund, who had previously been taken into the service of the faithless daughters of Lear, has now obtained all that his family possessed, along with the ancestral titles, and has thus reached the goal of his first ambition. But a new and higher sphere has been opened to him, namely, the possession of the State.

The fearful retribution of Gloster speedily follows. He has not seen that he has been doing to his own child what Goneril and Regan were doing to their father. The old man is seized, his eyes are plucked out, and he is thrust forth to grope his way in the world. Like the ancient *Cædipus*, he did not see when he had eyes — the result is, he loses them. He learns, however, that Edmund is the informer who has brought upon him the present calamity, and at once the whole truth flashes upon his mind. He has pursued an innocent son with murderous wrath and outlawry ; he is himself now driven forth houseless and homeless, and he, too, has a price set upon his head. Another son he has brought into the world of institutions, under circumstances which produce nothing but wrong and degradation ; that son is the necessary instrument of his punishment. He has destroyed the rational principle of the Family by his act ; his own family is disrupted and

turned against him. The consequences of his deed are upon him. Such is the first thread of the first movement, ending in the disruption of Gloster's family.

2. It is now time to go back to the beginning and trace the second thread of this first movement, namely, the family of Lear, to a similar disruption. The general offense of both Gloster and Lear is the same — violation of the right of the Family. Their conduct is fundamentally the same; they trust their faithless, and banish their faithful, children. But the origin and special form of their offenses are very different. The play presupposes in Gloster the act of incontinence; in Lear the tyrannical disposition which overbears and destroys all individual right. With this latter character we are now prepared to begin.

The central figure of the second thread — in fact, of the whole play — is the King. The three essential circumstances pertaining to him are his time of life, his long rule, and his absolute power. They make him a tyrant, but a tyrant of a peculiar kind. He is introduced to us with a character long since formed, and now hardened and stiffened with age. He has been, and is still, the absolute monarch whose mandates are not to be questioned. This unlimited authority has fed his temper till it is wholly unyielding and wholly uncontrollable. Any restraint put upon his caprice causes him to boil over with the most intense passion; irascibility has, therefore, become one of his most marked characteristics. The course of the drama will exhibit the various limitations placed upon him, one after another, and increasing in severity, till the absolute monarch, who prescribed to all their bounds, becomes the outcast — the most limited of

mortals. Old age, long rule, and uncontrolled power combined can alone produce such a man.

Now this King, whose character springs from, and rests upon, unlimited authority, is ready to surrender his sway — that is, surrender the very ground of his existence. Tired of the cares of government, yet not weary of its pomp and outward show, he proposes to resign the reality of power and yet retain its appearance—to play the king and yet be freed from the troubles of kingship. He will thus reduce himself to a mere semblance. His desire is to seem to possess authority, while, in truth, he has wiped its last vestige. Such is the contradiction which he deems possible to be realized. The logical result is manifest; the shadow must prove itself to be shadow, and not substance; the show of authority must go where authority actually resides.

This will be a leading phase of the progress of Lear in the second thread before us. He will pass from semblance to nothingness; there is no help for him, since he is fighting for a shadow, and has thrown away that which might assist him, if anything could, namely, authority. Every remnant of power will be stripped from him; the ensigns of royalty will also be taken away; he will descend from the palace to the hovel, from the mitred king to the unclothed animal of the forest. In general, from the absolute monarch he will become the most limited individual — a transition which is wholly involved in his choosing the shadow for the substance of authority.

Running parallel with this transition is another which is intimately connected with it — the transition from sanity to madness. Domination, unopposed and uncontrolled, was the basis upon which the spiritual nature of Lear

reposed; destroy this basis, and the prop of his mind is gone. He was too old and too stiff to adjust himself at once to such an overwhelming and sudden change in his outward circumstances. He was wholly the creature of external forms—his thoughts rested in them; when they are gone he has quite lost the entire content of his existence. The insanity of Lear thus has its adequate motive in the suddenness and completeness of this transition.

Such is, in general, the character of Lear. Let us now consider its effect upon those around him—upon his family and court. What will be the results of long years of arbitrary rule? Two classes must arise—on the one hand, the hypocritical and faithless; on the other, the rigidly true and faithful. The former class is composed of the sycophants of power who administer to the caprices of rulers—who flatter and fawn in success, but are equally ready to desert, and even to strike, in misfortune. They are the product of a forced external conformity, full of intrigue and treachery. Lear's court is mainly composed of such characters, at the head of whom stand Goneril and Regan; yet even his own chosen companions—his knights—seem no exception. But the second class will also be there, made up of the virtuous few, who, by a kind of reaction, will be the very opposite of what they see around themselves. They must possess strong, even stoical, natures to resist the current. Instead of the glib and guileful phrases of the courtier, they will be blunt and direct in speech. The prevailing corruption will only increase the stern code of their morality; but, chiefly, the utter faithlessness of the time will engender in them the most heroic fidelity. In Lear's own family this class is represented by Cordelia; in the court by Kent, in a still different relation, more

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fully to be explained hereafter by the Fool. These two classes, therefore, spring directly from the character and situation of Lear. Moreover, since he has chosen the semblance, and rejected the reality, his course must be to retain the false flatterer and drive off the true friend. Hence the second class will soon be compelled to fly from his presence.

The tyrannical nature of Lear, therefore, seeks to reduce everybody to an apparent submission and outward conformity. His first collision is with the true and honest people of his court, whom he banishes. Having thereby made the world around him a semblance, he also concludes to become semblance himself. Lear is thus about to manifest in his action various phases of one grand transition, all of which are the direct consequences of his character and situation; he will pass from wrong against his daughter to wrong from his daughters; from unlimited power to the most limited existence; from sanity to madness — in general, from appearance to nothingness. That is, the negative sweep of his deed involves in one common destruction the world of morality, of action, and of intelligence.

Having thus elaborated the essential elements of the second thread, we can now take up its incidents and trace the above-mentioned principles in their concrete development. First comes the division of the realm by Lear, who bases his conduct upon his daughters' expressions of love toward him. This scene has been often censured, and sometimes defended, upon a misconception of its meaning. It has just been stated that the character of Lear rests in the outward form, and not the inner essence, of things; that he prefers the semblance of power to its reality. So the appearance is there, he is satisfied. Hence it is in

perfect keeping with his situation, and strongly indicative of his character, that he lays far more stress upon external and noisy expressions of love than upon genuine, but quiet, affection. Goneril and Regan both declare, in formal phrase, their unfathomable, unspeakable devotion, and receive their share of the kingdom. Now comes Cordelia; she will be the opposite, according to her severe nature, and she will also be blunt in speech. She loves her father according to her duty—no more. She places, therefore, a limit upon her love to parent—an ethical one, too, that of love to husband. The old man at once boils over with anger, curses and banishes his daughter. In his imprecation he renounces fatherhood; he commits the crime against the Family; his curse will be literally fulfilled in himself through his other daughters.

The code of Cordelia is *duty* and *truth* in all their severity. She proposes, not only to do what is right, but to say it without disguise. Her manner is firm and resolute, but quiet; she is not the simple ethical character, but is reflective and intellectual. She knows the disposition of her sisters, and indicates the result. She rejects the suit of Burgundy, since his love is not pure, but based on gain. Her acts seem, not instinctive, but rather the result of conscious principles, which are her guide and support in the prevailing corruption. She is, therefore, essentially intellectual; a woman who can think, and who carefully adjusts herself in all the ethical relations of life; but she is, at the same time, womanly and devoted. For her assertion of supreme love to husband she is cursed by Lear, who thus curses the very essence of the Family, whose first principle is the unity and mutual devotion of man and wife.

Kent, who belongs to the same school of stern moralists as Cordelia, also undertakes to place a limit upon the old King. The result is just what must happen from an aged and absolute ruler—his rage swells at the audacity, and Kent is banished. In the latter, honest counsel and courageous utterance take their departure from the court. But fidelity is forever faithful; that of Kent is stoical—the deepest principle of his nature. Whatever wrongs he may suffer as an individual, he is still true to his allegiance. Hence he will return and serve his king in disguise; he cannot do differently. With this obstinate nature is coupled another cognate trait—he is rough in manner and blunt in speech. As above stated, he is the product of the reaction against courtly hypocrisy and flattery.

Lear has now succeeded in getting rid of every species of fidelity—fidelity to parent in Cordelia, and fidelity to King in Kent—fidelity to Family and to State. The world of appearance is everywhere triumphant. Lear has completely realized his principle; he is himself a shadow; all are shadows around him; they seem what they are not. Even fidelity must disguise itself; it dares not appear in its real form, hence Kent has to put on a deceptive guise in order to be faithful. Wisdom also can show her face only in the garb of folly; the sagest counselor of the King is his Fool. The same result was observed in the preceding thread concerning the family of Gloster. Edmund, the innocent and true son, is compelled to flee and assume the guise of a madman, while the false Bastard is triumphant in his wildest schemes. Society is a grand masquerade, where each person seems to be what he is not; the world has become one immense deception.

When such a state of things becomes universal, the

logical result begins to make itself manifest; falsehood must be false to itself, and will turn upon and destroy itself. The sham-king, Lear, must have his semblance stripped away, and be reduced to what he really is. Goneril upbraids him to his face, and proposes to diminish his train of knights; she, in every respect, treats him as a shadow. She knows and states precisely the contradiction in his conduct:

—“Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he hath given away.”

He cannot be semblance, and, at the same time, possess authority. Now she holds the power to which she has hitherto bowed while she was shadow. Lear's turn is come; he must follow the logic of his situation. Moreover, he has banished his faithful daughter—why should his daughters be faithful to him? It is his own deed returning upon him through his own family. Nevertheless, Goneril's guilt is not diminished; she is false to her agreement, and undutiful to her parent.

But Lear will not receive any limitation without the most terrific display of passion. A second time he launches a curse against a daughter. He prays that she may never have offspring, or, if she have, that it may be a monster. Therein he curses his own generation; his imprecation is that his own tribe may perish. It is fulfilled to the letter. For the first time a limit has been placed upon him which he could not sweep away; with it he begins to see the wrong done to Cordelia; with it, too, his mind begins to break down. “Let me not be mad, sweet heaven,” is his pitiful utterance. Hereupon he departs for his other daughter.

But this world of disguise is not one of utter falsehood and wickedness, for fidelity is also here in disguise. We have already mentioned Kent, who takes service as a menial; sincerity itself must be insincere; truth has to assume the form of deception. To this pass has Lear reduced his whole court. If the honest man must become dishonest in order to be true to his nature, what of the naturally dishonest? Kent acts as servant to his master; his duties are of the lower kind; he cannot appear as the adviser of the King, since the latter will suffer no advice. He is messenger, and zealously defends the royal honor against the malign attacks of Oswald, the unprincipled and ready tool of the wicked daughter, Goneril.

But the complete and conscious reflection of this world is in the Fool. He, too, is in disguise — seems to be what he is not, and thus is a true representative of his time. But his peculiarity is that he sees beneath the masks of all around him, and knows their acts and purposes. He is the intellectual man, yet his intelligence must also be disguised; wisdom casts an inverted image in the waters of untruth. The contradiction is that the wise man of the company is the Fool. His theme is the folly of Lear's conduct; he offers the latter a coxcomb — the symbol of his own profession. Knowing the character of the two daughters, he sees the situation and anticipates the result. He alone appears to adequately comprehend the act of Lear in surrendering the kingdom, and he alone can assume disguise sufficient to tell to the old King the nature of that act without being banished. Thus wisdom, at the court of Lear, dares look only through the mask of folly, and good counsel take the form of nonsense. In this way, therefore, no insult or reproof is given to the haughty old

King, for, when a fool says anything, it is supposed to be foolish. But, if the truth should assume the form of grave advice, it would imply the lack of wisdom on the part of the ruler. Hence the absolute monarch has his critic, but he must take the form of a fool — then the royal vanity is not touched. Thus it will be seen that not only fidelity and truth, but even intelligence, must seem to be what they are not, when semblance is the universal principle, and the Fool becomes a necessary part of this world of appearance.

Lear sets out for the second daughter, but there he meets with even worse treatment. The Fool foresaw what the supposed wise man, the King, did not. The dispositions of the two daughters are alike — “as a crab to a crab;” he, in this comparison, declares the result. Goneril hastens to support her sister Regan, who, in strength of will, seems to have been the weaker and less aggressive of the two women, and strongly influenced by her more determined sister. They put the messenger of their father in the stocks; they together strip the old King of the last vestige of royalty. The Fool states that the greatest folly is now fidelity. It were wisdom to let go a great wheel running down hill; still, he will remain fool and faithful. Lear struggles with himself to curb his anger; he tries to suppress the rising of his heart — the mother, as he calls it; he prays for patience; he does not curse Regan as he did Cordelia and Goneril. Still, his self-restraint is not adequate; his passion boils over. He is now ready to submit to conditions which he formerly rejected with scorn, but it is too late. Finally, when the last semblance of authority is torn from him and the shadow has fled, he becomes what he really is — a private individual of the humblest kind:

“A poor, infirm, weak, despised old man.”

He is now conscious of his own condition. The deceitful mirage no longer blinds his eyes. But with this external show and power his mind has been so long and so intimately connected, that the loss of the one involves the loss of the other. "O fool! I shall go mad," has been his poignant cry at every limitation.

But one step he will not take — he will not be dependent upon his daughters. But they are the sovereigns; nothing, therefore, remains for Lear but to flee to the woods, to the freedom of nature. This is the ground of the transition in the Third Act; for the entire world of institutions has been closed against him; both Family and State have cast him forth. What security, then, is possible for the individual? Lear, therefore, rushes out into the rude elements, without civil protection, without shelter, and, finally, without clothing.

But here, too, he has to encounter a conflict, namely, the storm. The elements assail him, and conspire with his daughters, for which he reproaches them with servility. Still, he defies them—in fact, he invokes them to blot out the whole world, which has become so utterly perverse and disordered. Now the show is all gone—"take physic, pomp." The reality of what he is comes up to his mind; he is ready to sympathize with the most wretched. But what is this object which rises before his eyes? Low as Lear is himself, there is one person still lower. Here he is—Edgar, disguised as mad Tom. Lear notices the difference; no human being shall be beneath him. "Thou art the thing itself; unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art; off, off!" and he tears away his garments. He is now reduced to the natural individual. Every product of man's intelligence, from the highest institutions to the humblest contrivances,

Lear's decline

even to clothing, he has thrown away ; in other words, he has banished the whole content of his rational existence. The logical result must be that he is irrational. From the king he has descended to the animal.

All along he has given premonitions of insanity. He knows "that way madness lies;" for these external conflicts have been accompanied with a corresponding internal conflict. He has always been struggling to bear up against his own passion — "Patience I need." He, who was unlimited in power, now has every restraint put upon him, till he reaches zero. The act of his two daughters gets complete possession of his thoughts ; he tries them for their deed in his wild delirium. He has lost his relation to the outward world ; his mind is eaten up with its own conflicts ; the result is — madness.

Let us grasp the complete picture of this society — this Perverted World, as it may be called, and its characters. First in order come Edgar and Lear, now reduced to the same outward condition, and from the same general cause. Both have touched the very bottom of human misery ; both are in a deadly struggle with the spiritual and with the physical world — with quite the sum total of being. The Family has turned against them, the State has driven them forth from its protection, and Nature herself has assailed them with her terrific forces. Such is the outcome of man in hostility with institutions. Still, neither Lear nor Edgar are conquered ; in spirit they hold out — are even defiant. The unconquerable will — the subjective independence of man — could not be asserted against an opposition more destructive. But Edgar is sane ; his madness is only simulated, while that of Lear is real. Lear has been deprived of what constituted the innermost essence of his nature, namely, the show of authority. But the mind of Edgar

had never become so interwoven with his rank and power that separation from them would destroy it. He is also young and supple ; he can bend without breaking.

Gloster is also present in these wild scenes, deeply sympathetic with Lear, and incurring danger for the sake of the old King. But his own sympathy condemns him. Before his eyes stands a man — his faithful son — whom his wrong has reduced to a condition as miserable as that of Lear. Every word which he speaks against the unkind daughters is a judgment against himself. That judgment is executed upon him in a manner which every humane feeling cries out to be too severe.

Kent, the picture of fidelity, is also present in the storm ; for he is going to follow his master through every grade of calamity. Still, his fidelity must remain in disguise, in order to accomplish itself. It dares not, even now, assume its native form. The world of appearance has, however, reached its climax ; it is rapidly dissolving. Lear, its original source and supporter, has himself become, not merely the shadow of a king, but the shadow of a man. Reason has taken its flight, and the erect animal shape alone remains.

The Fool, too, is present in the tempest, trying to divert the King from his thoughts, and to jest away his approaching insanity ; but it is to no purpose. Wisdom — though, to effect its design, it has assumed the garb of folly — has not succeeded. The Fool, therefore, drops out now ; his function must cease when Lear is no longer rational, but has himself turned fool. It was his duty to reflect the acts of the King in their true character, so that the latter might behold what he was doing. When intelligence is gone this is impossible.

There never was painted such a picture as this of the

Third Act; it is the world turned upside down — morally, mentally, physically. To give it greater strength and terror the two threads of the action are now brought together. There are the faithless, protected in their wrongs by institutions, and sheltered by their palaces from the raging elements. There are the three disguises — that of innocence, that of fidelity, that of wisdom — seeking to be true to their own nature under the most alien forms. Then there is the parent of these false appearances, himself now the shadow of a shadow. Finally, there is the storm without — one of the warring principles in itself, and, at the same time, symbolical of the storm within. It is the Perverted World; it seems quite to reach the extreme negative point short of annihilation.

The consequences of Lear's conduct and character are now complete; they have produced their legitimate fruit. The semblance of absolute authority has vanished; he is now the humblest of mortals. At the same time he has passed from sanity to madness. The unlimited monarch has descended to the most narrow existence — has become, in fact, a beast of the forest. But, above all, his wrong against the Family has met with a retribution which seems but too harsh and horrible. The fate of Gloster, as before remarked, is in every essential respect similar, for he, too, is sent forth an outcast, deprived of title and possessions — dazed, if not crazed, by his misfortunes. The two threads have thus been brought down to the time of the utter disruption of the two families, and of the punishment of the two parents. Now the reaction must be portrayed, which will vindicate and restore the shattered institutions of the world, bring the false and guilty to justice, and cause the triumph of the faithful and innocent.

II. We have here reached, therefore, the second grand movement of the play, which will depict the reaction against the successful, but guilty, children, and will show the completed retribution. The Ethical World is lying in ruins, falsehood is triumphant, honesty banished, all moral ties destroyed, and the family disrupted. Chaos seems to have come again. But from this chaos the elements are beginning to coalesce, which will restore order and avenge the violated institutions of man's rational nature. The faithful children were unjustly cast off by their parents, and the latter have been punished for their wrong. But thus a new guilt has arisen—that of the faithless children, whose punishment must now also be portrayed; for, in their case, the same law of retribution holds good which was observed in the case of their parents.

But who are to be the instruments of their chastisement? The faithful children will return and seek to avenge the wrongs and recover the rights of themselves and of their parents. This attempt will constitute the second movement; it is an attempt to restore the disrupted Family. Thus the circle of the whole action is complete; it begins with the wrong done to the faithful children, and ends with putting into their hands the retribution. But the effort will not be fully successful. The parents cannot be completely restored to their former condition, for their deed is essentially the same as that of their faithless children.

In this second movement, also, there are two main threads, though they are different from the two threads of the first movement, which are composed of the families of Lear and Gloster. Now the faithless members of both families coalesce, and also the faithful members of both

families are thrown together. Edmund unites and works with Regan and Goneril on the one hand, and on the other hand Edgar sympathizes with, if he does not aid, the party of Cordelia. These two sides collide. The faithless children are victorious in the external conflict, but the daughters perish in a struggle between themselves, and Edmund falls in single combat with his brother.

1. Beginning, therefore, with the first thread, we observe that it is composed of the faithful children, Edgar and Cordelia, together with the groups of which each one is the central figure. Both are similar in conduct and character; both bring aid and solace to their afflicted parents, who, however, have done them the deepest wrong. But their fidelity never falters; their duty cannot give way to revenge or indifference. Such has been their action from the beginning, such it will remain to the end. Their profoundest principle is to be true to the Family—Edgar to Gloster, Cordelia to Lear. Restoration, internal and external, for their parents is the great object of their endeavor. The two fathers are to be brought back to their previous circumstances of honor and power if possible; at least they are to be solaced, comforted, and restored in mind. Hence a great change is observable in this portion of the drama. The tremendous upheavals of volcanic passion have ceased, and, in their stead, the tenderest emotions of affection and pity stir the breast. The action becomes more quiet and more pathetic; tears succeed to wrath; loving devotion to ingratitude.

(a.) First, then, let us follow the group which mainly consists of Edgar and his father. They are almost independent through the whole of the second movement, and can be easily separated from the rest of the action. Edgar

still retains the disguise of mad Tom; he is thinking of Lear, and prefers his own state—"better unknown to be contemned than still contemned and flattered." He would choose the reality, however bitter, to a false appearance, however agreeable, so deep is the truth and sincerity of his character. But who is this wretched, mutilated man who meets him here upon the wild heath? It is his father, Gloster—blind, fleeing from the cruelty of his own son, accompanied by a faithful tenant as a guide. The father's thoughts are occupied about his injured child; he is humbled to the earth by his misfortunes, and still more by his own deeds. As in the case of Lear, calamity has made his sympathy universal. His heart is full of commiseration for the poor and lowly; he thinks of the poor beggar (who was the disguised Edgar) in the storm. But his chief mental state consists in the belief that he is the victim of an almighty, yet cruel, power above:

"As flies to wanton boys, we are to the Gods—
They kill us for their sport."

Such a creed is the fruit of his superstition—of his belief in external determination; for, if God be the immediate cause of all events, then misfortune can be only Divine persecution, and hope is impossible. It, therefore, lies deep in the characters of Lear and Gloster that the one ends in insanity and the other in despair.

Gloster, accordingly, wishes to end the unequal contest by ending his own existence, and, hence, his desire is to reach the precipice of Dover. But it is the object of Edgar, who now acts as his leader instead of the aged tenant, to rescue him from despair, and reconcile him again with the world. Then will follow the disclosure of the

disguised son, when the father can endure the recognition. Consequently, Edgar practices an artifice upon the old, blind man — makes him believe that he has fallen down the lofty cliff; that he has been preserved by the miraculous interposition of the gods; that, in fine, *he* must be the object of their special care and protection. It is true that the son skillfully makes use of his father's weakness, namely, superstition, to effect his pious purpose; this motive is particularly apparent in the description of the fiend whose eyes —

“ Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelked and waved like the enridged sea;
It was some fiend ”—

And truly it was a fiend — despair — which lured the wretched man to the precipice. But Gloster is cured; he is now ready to accept life anew, and to endure every species of affliction. He seems also to abandon his notion of a divine persecution directed against himself.

Gloster again meets Lear — mad, roaming at large over the country, though Cordelia is seeking to get possession of his person, in order to restore him. It is the last time that the two ill-fated parents come together; both have touched the lowest depths of misfortune; both are now found and cared for by the children to whom they have done the greatest injustice. Finally, Edgar performs the highest filial act — he saves his father from death at the hands of Oswald, and slays the assassin. Thus he has rescued the mind within from despair, and preserved the body without from destruction. He may, hence, be said to have restored his parent to existence; filial duty now reaches in him its climax. But the roar of battle is heard.

He is now conscious of his own condition. The deceitful mirage no longer blinds his eyes. But with this external show and power his mind has been so long and so intimately connected, that the loss of the one involves the loss of the other. "O fool! I shall go mad," has been his poignant cry at every limitation.

But one step he will not take — he will not be dependent upon his daughters. But they are the sovereigns; nothing, therefore, remains for Lear but to flee to the woods, to the freedom of nature. This is the ground of the transition in the Third Act; for the entire world of institutions has been closed against him; both Family and State have cast him forth. What security, then, is possible for the individual? Lear, therefore, rushes out into the rude elements, without civil protection, without shelter, and, finally, without clothing.

But here, too, he has to encounter a conflict, namely, the storm. The elements assail him, and conspire with his daughters, for which he reproaches them with servility. Still, he defies them—in fact, he invokes them to blot out the whole world, which has become so utterly perverse and disordered. Now the show is all gone—"take physic, pomp." The reality of what he is comes up to his mind; he is ready to sympathize with the most wretched. But what is this object which rises before his eyes? Low as Lear is himself, there is one person still lower. Here he is—Edgar, disguised as mad Tom. Lear notices the difference; no human being shall be beneath him. "Thou art the thing itself; unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art; off, off!" and he tears away his garments. He is now reduced to the natural individual. Every product of man's intelligence, from the highest institutions to the humblest contrivances,

Lear's madness

even to clothing, he has thrown away; in other words, he has banished the whole content of his rational existence. The logical result must be that he is irrational. From the king he has descended to the animal.

All along he has given premonitions of insanity. He knows "that way madness lies;" for these external conflicts have been accompanied with a corresponding internal conflict. He has always been struggling to bear up against his own passion — "Patience I need." He, who was unlimited in power, now has every restraint put upon him, till he reaches zero. The act of his two daughters gets complete possession of his thoughts; he tries them for their deed in his wild delirium. He has lost his relation to the outward world; his mind is eaten up with its own conflicts; the result is — madness.

Let us grasp the complete picture of this society — this Perverted World, as it may be called, and its characters. First in order come Edgar and Lear, now reduced to the same outward condition, and from the same general cause. Both have touched the very bottom of human misery; both are in a deadly struggle with the spiritual and with the physical world — with quite the sum total of being. The Family has turned against them, the State has driven them forth from its protection, and Nature herself has assailed them with her terrific forces. Such is the outcome of man in hostility with institutions. Still, neither Lear nor Edgar are conquered; in spirit they hold out — are even defiant. The unconquerable will — the subjective independence of man — could not be asserted against an opposition more destructive. But Edgar is sane; his madness is only simulated, while that of Lear is real. Lear has been deprived of what constituted the innermost essence of his nature, namely, the show of authority. But the mind of Edgar

had never become so interwoven with his rank and power that separation from them would destroy it. He is also young and supple; he can bend without breaking.

Gloster is also present in these wild scenes, deeply sympathetic with Lear, and incurring danger for the sake of the old King. But his own sympathy condemns him. Before his eyes stands a man — his faithful son — whom his wrong has reduced to a condition as miserable as that of Lear. Every word which he speaks against the unkind daughters is a judgment against himself. That judgment is executed upon him in a manner which every humane feeling cries out to be too severe.

Kent, the picture of fidelity, is also present in the storm; for he is going to follow his master through every grade of calamity. Still, his fidelity must remain in disguise, in order to accomplish itself. It dares not, even now, assume its native form. The world of appearance has, however, reached its climax; it is rapidly dissolving. Lear, its original source and supporter, has himself become, not merely the shadow of a king, but the shadow of a man. Reason has taken its flight, and the erect animal shape alone remains.

The Fool, too, is present in the tempest, trying to divert the King from his thoughts, and to jest away his approaching insanity; but it is to no purpose. Wisdom — though, to effect its design, it has assumed the garb of folly — has not succeeded. The Fool, therefore, drops out now; his function must cease when Lear is no longer rational, but has himself turned fool. It was his duty to reflect the acts of the King in their true character, so that the latter might behold what he was doing. When intelligence is gone this is impossible.

There never was painted such a picture as this of the

Third Act; it is the world turned upside down — morally, mentally, physically. To give it greater strength and terror the two threads of the action are now brought together. There are the faithless, protected in their wrongs by institutions, and sheltered by their palaces from the raging elements. There are the three disguises — that of innocence, that of fidelity, that of wisdom — seeking to be true to their own nature under the most alien forms. Then there is the parent of these false appearances, himself now the shadow of a shadow. Finally, there is the storm without — one of the warring principles in itself, and, at the same time, symbolical of the storm within. It is the Perverted World; it seems quite to reach the extreme negative point short of annihilation.

The consequences of Lear's conduct and character are now complete; they have produced their legitimate fruit. The semblance of absolute authority has vanished; he is now the humblest of mortals. At the same time he has passed from sanity to madness. The unlimited monarch has descended to the most narrow existence — has become, in fact, a beast of the forest. But, above all, his wrong against the Family has met with a retribution which seems but too harsh and horrible. The fate of Gloster, as before remarked, is in every essential respect similar, for he, too, is sent forth an outcast, deprived of title and possessions — dazed, if not crazed, by his misfortunes. The two threads have thus been brought down to the time of the utter disruption of the two families, and of the punishment of the two parents. Now the reaction must be portrayed, which will vindicate and restore the shattered institutions of the world, bring the false and guilty to justice, and cause the triumph of the faithful and innocent.

II. We have here reached, therefore, the second grand movement of the play, which will depict the reaction against the successful, but guilty, children, and will show the completed retribution. The Ethical World is lying in ruin; falsehood is triumphant, honesty banished, all moral law destroyed, and the family disrupted. Chaos seems to have come again. But from this chaos the elements are beginning to coalesce, which will restore order and avenge the violated institutions of man's rational nature. The faithful children were unjustly cast off by their parents, and the latter have been punished for their wrong, but thus a new guilt has arisen—that of the faithless children, whose punishment must now also be portrayed; for, in their case, the same law of retribution holds good which was observed in the case of their parents.

But who are to be the instruments of their chastisement? The faithful children will return and seek to avenge the wrongs and recover the rights of themselves and of their parents. This attempt will constitute the second movement: it is an attempt to restore the disrupted Family. Thus the circle of the whole action is complete; it begins with the wrong done to the faithful children, and ends with putting into their hands the retribution. But the effort will not be fully successful. The parents cannot be completely restored to their former condition, for their deed is essentially the same as that of their faithless children.

In this second movement, also, there are two main threads, though they are different from the two threads of the first movement, which are composed of the families of Lear and Gloster. Now the faithless members of both families coalesce, and also the faithful members of both

families are thrown together. Edmund unites and works with Regan and Goneril on the one hand, and on the other hand Edgar sympathizes with, if he does not aid, the party of Cordelia. These two sides collide. The faithless children are victorious in the external conflict, but the daughters perish in a struggle between themselves, and Edmund falls in single combat with his brother.

1. Beginning, therefore, with the first thread, we observe that it is composed of the faithful children, Edgar and Cordelia, together with the groups of which each one is the central figure. Both are similar in conduct and character; both bring aid and solace to their afflicted parents, who, however, have done them the deepest wrong. But their fidelity never falters; their duty cannot give way to revenge or indifference. Such has been their action from the beginning, such it will remain to the end. Their profoundest principle is to be true to the Family—Edgar to Gloster, Cordelia to Lear. Restoration, internal and external, for their parents is the great object of their endeavor. The two fathers are to be brought back to their previous circumstances of honor and power if possible; at least they are to be solaced, comforted, and restored in mind. Hence a great change is observable in this portion of the drama. The tremendous upheavals of volcanic passion have ceased, and, in their stead, the tenderest emotions of affection and pity stir the breast. The action becomes more quiet and more pathetic; tears succeed to wrath; loving devotion to ingratitude.

(a.) First, then, let us follow the group which mainly consists of Edgar and his father. They are almost independent through the whole of the second movement, and can be easily separated from the rest of the action. Edgar

still retains the disguise of mad Tom; he is thinking of Lear, and prefers his own state — “better unknown to be contemned than still contemned and flattered.” He would choose the reality, however bitter, to a false appearance, however agreeable, so deep is the truth and sincerity of his character. But who is this wretched, mutilated man who meets him here upon the wild heath? It is his father, Gloster — blind, fleeing from the cruelty of his own son, accompanied by a faithful tenant as a guide. The father’s thoughts are occupied about his injured child; he is humbled to the earth by his misfortunes, and still more by his own deeds. As in the case of Lear, calamity has made his sympathy universal. His heart is full of commiseration for the poor and lowly; he thinks of the poor beggar (who was the disguised Edgar) in the storm. But his chief mental state consists in the belief that he is the victim of an almighty, yet cruel, power above:

“As flies to wanton boys, we are to the Gods—
They kill us for their sport.”

Such a creed is the fruit of his superstition—of his belief in external determination; for, if God be the immediate cause of all events, then misfortune can be only Divine persecution, and hope is impossible. It, therefore, lies deep in the characters of Lear and Gloster that the one ends in insanity and the other in despair.

Gloster, accordingly, wishes to end the unequal contest by ending his own existence, and, hence, his desire is to reach the precipice of Dover. But it is the object of Edgar, who now acts as his leader instead of the aged tenant, to rescue him from despair, and reconcile him again with the world. Then will follow the disclosure of the

disguised son, when the father can endure the recognition. Consequently, Edgar practices an artifice upon the old, blind man — makes him believe that he has fallen down the lofty cliff; that he has been preserved by the miraculous interposition of the gods; that, in fine, *he* must be the object of their special care and protection. It is true that the son skillfully makes use of his father's weakness, namely, superstition, to effect his pious purpose; this motive is particularly apparent in the description of the fiend whose eyes —

“ Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelked and waved like the enridged sea;
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And truly it was a fiend — despair — which lured the wretched man to the precipice. But Gloster is cured; he is now ready to accept life anew, and to endure every species of affliction. He seems also to abandon his notion of a divine persecution directed against himself.

Gloster again meets Lear — mad, roaming at large over the country, though Cordelia is seeking to get possession of his person, in order to restore him. It is the last time that the two ill-fated parents come together; both have touched the lowest depths of misfortune; both are now found and cared for by the children to whom they have done the greatest injustice. Finally, Edgar performs the highest filial act — he saves his father from death at the hands of Oswald, and slays the assassin. Thus he has rescued the mind within from despair, and preserved the body without from destruction. He may, hence, be said to have restored his parent to existence; filial duty now reaches in him its climax. But the roar of battle is heard.

around them; Edgar puts his father in a place of safety and goes out to observe the result of the conflict. He does not seem to have participated in the fight; he keeps aloof from the collision with the State, and, hence, is preserved at the end of the play. The great end of all his efforts is the personal security and mental repose of his parent.

Finally, the son reveals himself. Can we wonder that the old, blind father could not support the conflict—could not endure the joy and the grief of the recognition? Gloster, therefore, cannot be restored to the Family whose essence he has so deeply violated. His heart breaks in the process; his emotional nature cannot bear up under the contradictory feelings of his situation. His inability to make this transition is the logical necessity of his character. Gloster is not a bad, but a weak, man. He has unwittingly been made the instrument of the disruption of his own family. Hence, if he be restored to it, there is the same possibility of his disrupting it again, for this result is the fruit of his intellectual weakness. It should also be observed that Edgar is no longer the unsophisticated youth who was so completely outwitted by the Bastard. He has learned to disguise himself, and to assume a wonderful variety of characters; the number and skill of the deceptions which he practices upon his father, to accomplish the most unselfish and pious ends, are startling to the rigid moralist. His education has been severe, but thorough, and, when he now comes to meet Edmund, he is prepared.

Gloster, therefore, perishes—the victim of his faithless son, who, in his turn, must meet with retribution. To Edgar remains the final duty of destroying the instrument of destruction—a negative, but necessary, result of his prin-

ciple ; for that principle is the restoration of the disrupted family, which, however, since the death of Gloster, is impossible ; but the cause of the disruption, as well as of his own wrongs, still exists and must be removed. Thus Edgar, though declaring openly the primal guilt of his father, slays his illegitimate brother. The leading element of his character is fidelity to Family—here in the form of devotion to parent, whose enemies he destroys, and whose mind he rescues from despair.

(b.) Similar is the purpose, and also the character, of Cordelia, who is the main figure in the second group of this first thread, which group we are now ready to consider. She, too, is the faithful, yet injured, child ; she, too, seeks the internal and external restoration of her father. But she goes a step further than Edgar—she assails the State in her attempt to recover the rights of Lear. She thus falls into guilt, which leads to the most fatal consequences. Her endeavor has three different phases—restoration of her parent to reason, to Family, and to State.

First of all, the attempt must be made to cure the insanity of Lear. He seems to be wandering alone over the country, without care or guidance ; his talk, though wild and incoherent, is mainly connected with his lost authority, with the cruelty of his daughters, and, in general, with the utter perversity of both the institutional and moral worlds, which he, in his raving mood, scoffs at and condemns with sarcastic bitterness. The Poet has thus intimated the cause of his madness, as well as the means of its cure—restore him to a daughter's love, and to the image of respect and power, and the ground of his insanity is removed. These are just the spiritual medicines which Cordelia administers to him after sufficient physical repose. In the pathetic

scene, when he awakens, she asks for his blessing with the deepest affection, and assures him that he is again in his own kingdom. Lear is thus restored to reason, and to Family with its love ; the original cause of madness is taken away.

It is manifest that Cordelia is different from what she was in the First Act ; a new element of her nature seems to have developed itself. Previously we saw her rigid moral code and her intellectuality brought into the greatest prominence ; now her character, in its softer and more beautiful features, is shown ; we behold her devotion to parent, as well as her intense emotional nature, which, however, she is able to keep under perfect control. Still, the germ of this new trait can be found in her earlier declarations and demeanor. In the first scene—that of the partition—she repeatedly expresses her affection for her father :

“What shall Cordelia speak? Love and be silent,” etc.

It is not merely the physical repose prescribed by the doctor which clears up the clouded intellect of Lear—it is the presence of Cordelia, who brings with her a double restoration—that of subjective affection on the one hand, and that of objective institutions on the other. It was the loss of these, through the conduct of Regan and Goneril, which shattered his reason ; sanity, therefore, returns with the return of Cordelia.

But her third purpose is that which ruins her cause. She brings a French army into England to secure to her father his right, as she says, by which she evidently means to place him again on the throne. She thus assails the highest ethical institution of man—the State—and unwittingly commits herself the greatest wrong. Moreover,

Lear had resigned his power and divided his kingdom ; he had no longer any just claim to the crown. Her invasion of the country rouses up against her the head of the State, Albany, who was otherwise favorable both to her and to Lear. But he had to defend his own realm, though he hates his associates and loves those who are fighting against him. Had Cordelia been satisfied with the restoration of her father to his reason and to his family, Albany would have given her both aid and sympathy. However much we may admire her character and regret her fate, however indignant we may be against her two sisters, still we must, in the end, say she did wrong—she violated the majesty of the State. In her affection for parent she attempted to destroy the higher principle for the sake of the lower. The result is, she loses the battle, is taken prisoner, and perishes.

✓ The death of Cordelia is often felt to be unjustifiable, and the play was once altered to suit this feeling. But a true comprehension of the nature of Dramatic Art will vindicate the Poet. The end of Tragedy is not that somebody get killed, or even that a villain be brought to justice ; it must show the collision of two ethical principles, both of which have validity in the reason of man. The individuals who are the representatives of these conflicting principles are brought into a struggle which admits of no mediation. Both, from one point of view, are in the right ; and yet both, from another point of view, are in the wrong. The deeper, more universal thought must decide the conflict and triumph in the end, for strife cannot be eternal. Cordelia's profoundest impulse is devotion to Family—a very lofty principle of action ; but she is led by it into a collision with the State—a still

higher principle. Undoubtedly these two elements ought to be harmonized if possible; but Tragedy means that they cannot always be harmonized, and, hence, the lesser must be subordinated by violence and death.

Cordelia is, therefore, a truly tragic character, whom we are compelled to condemn, though we shed tears over her fate. But she is something more—she is the tragic *female* character; for her collision is peculiar to her sex. The Family is the highest ethical principle of woman as woman—at least it has been hitherto in the history of the world, even though we may think that this state of things will be changed in the future. The readers of her own sex, therefore, will always feel—perhaps, ought always to feel—that she is in the right—that her death is unjustifiable. Let us contrast her action with that of Albany, who is a man, and holds to the other principle—the State. He, too, is indignant at the conduct of Goneril and Regan. He sympathizes deeply with the misfortunes of Lear, and wishes well to the efforts of Cordelia for the restoration of her father. But a French army means the ruin of his country—at least its control from without; he, therefore, is compelled to make the choice; he takes the State as his ethical principle, though he has to act with those whom he hates and against those whom he loves. Albany and Cordelia, hence, collide; it is the collision of man and woman, both of whom are the representatives of the essential ethical principles of their respective sexes. It is also, to a certain extent, the collision between emotion and reason. Our feelings go along with Cordelia—even Albany's feelings went along with Cordelia; for the Family is the realm of affection, and must always call forth the emotions of man. Still, intelligence must control sentiment, and subordinate

it to the higher end. The consequences of their actions are seen in the catastrophe; Cordelia perishes, while Albany survives as the ruler of his country.

(But our next anxious inquiry is concerning the fate of Lear. He has recovered from insanity through his daughter's love; what will be his condition, now that she is gone? He relapses momentarily into madness; but this is not the end. He cannot again be disrupted from the Family. His affection for Cordelia is most intense; he cares not for prison and captivity if she only be with him; her presence has become to him life itself. Hence, when he is convinced that she is dead, his heart ~~breaks~~ over her corpse — an end similar to that of Gloster. The first disruption of Lear's domestic ties cost him his reason; the second now costs him his life. It is, however, his own primal wrong which reaches through the whole play, and, at last, strikes the fatal blow. Such is the first thread, with its two very similar groups of faithful children.

2. There remains, finally, the second thread of the second movement to be considered. The faithless children of both families have come together — similarity of character naturally attracts them to one another. Edmund and the two sisters, therefore, constitute the heads of this group, to which also Albany must be added — though he only belongs to it partially. An external conflict has arisen with Cordelia, the nature and grounds of which have already been given. In it they were successful, as they happened to be the supporters of the State in conjunction with Albany. But the internal conflict has also arisen, as it must arise under the circumstances. The unity of the faithless cannot be permanent; they must be true to the deepest principle of their character, and, hence,

still retains the disguise of mad Tom; he is thinking of Lear, and prefers his own state—"better unknown to be contemned than still contemned and flattered." He would choose the reality, however bitter, to a false appearance, however agreeable, so deep is the truth and sincerity of his character. But who is this wretched, mutilated man who meets him here upon the wild heath? It is his father, Gloster—blind, fleeing from the cruelty of his own son, accompanied by a faithful tenant as a guide. The father's thoughts are occupied about his injured child; he is humbled to the earth by his misfortunes, and still more by his own deeds. As in the case of Lear, calamity has made his sympathy universal. His heart is full of commiseration for the poor and lowly; he thinks of the poor beggar (who was the disguised Edgar) in the storm. But his chief mental state consists in the belief that he is the victim of an almighty, yet cruel, power above:

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must be faithless to one another. This gives the struggle among themselves, which the Poet has also developed to make the delineation logical and complete.

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The action has now completed its revolution, and brought back to all the leading characters the consequences of their deeds ; the double guilt and the double retribution have been fully portrayed. The treatment of children by parents, and of parents by children, is the theme ; both fidelity and infidelity are shown in their most extreme manifestation. Two families are taken — that of the monarch and that of the subject ; the former develops within itself its own collisions, free from any external restraint, and, hence, exhibits the truest and most complete result ; the latter is largely influenced and determined in its course by authority, but an authority which is itself poisoned with domestic conflict. The exhaustiveness of the treatment is worthy of careful study. Regan is faithless to parent ; Goneril is faithless to both parent and husband ; Cordelia is true to both, yet assails another ethical principle — the State. The two sons and the two sons-in-law exhibit also distinct phases of the domestic tie ; they are still further divided, by the fundamental theme of the play, into the faithful and faithless — that is, a son and a son-in-law

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scene, when he awakens, she asks for his blessing with the deepest affection, and assures him that he is again in his own kingdom. Lear is thus restored to reason, and to Family with its love ; the original cause of madness is taken away.

It is manifest that Cordelia is different from what she was in the First Act ; a new element of her nature seems to have developed itself. Previously we saw her rigid moral code and her intellectuality brought into the greatest prominence ; now her character, in its softer and more beautiful features, is shown ; we behold her devotion to parent, as well as her intense emotional nature, which, however, she is able to keep under perfect control. Still, the germ of this new trait can be found in her earlier declarations and demeanor. In the first scene—that of the partition—she repeatedly expresses her affection for her father :

“What shall Cordelia speak? Love and be silent,” etc.

It is not merely the physical repose prescribed by the doctor which clears up the clouded intellect of Lear—it is the presence of Cordelia, who brings with her a double restoration—that of subjective affection on the one hand, and that of objective institutions on the other. It was the loss of these, through the conduct of Regan and Goneril, which shattered his reason ; sanity, therefore, returns with the return of Cordelia.

But her third purpose is that which ruins her cause. She brings a French army into England to secure to her father his right, as she says, by which she evidently means to place him again on the throne. She thus assails the highest ethical institution of man—the State—and unwittingly commits herself the greatest wrong. Moreover,

Lear had resigned his power and divided his kingdom; he had no longer any just claim to the crown. Her invasion of the country rouses up against her the head of the State, Albany, who was otherwise favorable both to her and to Lear. But he had to defend his own realm, though he hates his associates and loves those who are fighting against him. Had Cordelia been satisfied with the restoration of her father to his reason and to his family, Albany would have given her both aid and sympathy. However much we may admire her character and regret her fate, however indignant we may be against her two sisters, still we must, in the end, say she did wrong—she violated the majesty of the State. In her affection for parent she attempted to destroy the higher principle for the sake of the lower. The result is, she loses the battle, is taken prisoner, and perishes.

/ The death of Cordelia is often felt to be unjustifiable, and the play was once altered to suit this feeling. But a true comprehension of the nature of Dramatic Art will vindicate the Poet. The end of Tragedy is not that somebody get killed, or even that a villain be brought to justice; it must show the collision of two ethical principles, both of which have validity in the reason of man. The individuals who are the representatives of these conflicting principles are brought into a struggle which admits of no mediation. Both, from one point of view, are in the right; and yet both, from another point of view, are in the wrong. The deeper, more universal thought must decide the conflict and triumph in the end, for strife cannot be eternal. Cordelia's profoundest impulse is devotion to Family—a very lofty principle of action; but she is led by it into a collision with the State—a still

higher principle. Undoubtedly these two elements ought to be harmonized if possible ; but Tragedy means that they cannot always be harmonized, and, hence, the lesser must be subordinated by violence and death.

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II. GROUP.—TRAGEDIES.—(IDEAL.)

The ethical conflict, which, in the first group of tragedies, is portrayed in its natural form, now assumes a new shape, which it is much more difficult to comprehend. Supernatural figures are introduced to determine the Tragic Individual; he is seemingly swayed by an external power, which, however, is only his form of these same ethical forces which we saw at work in all other dramas. They, being transmitted through a peculiar mental medium, are entirely changed, and take on a fantastic shape; hence the interest becomes psychological rather than ethical, though the latter element still stands in the background.

Thus we pass to the Ideal Group of Tragedies, of which there are two examples in Shakespeare—*Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. In *Macbeth* the supernatural power is the Witches, who start the action agoing, and drive it on to the end. The purely ethical conflict lies between the right of the King to the throne and the ambition of the powerful subject who has saved the throne. But this simple conflict, owing to the subjective nature of the individual, evokes an ideal world of shapes, whose function is both to tempt and to punish. This is, therefore, truly a play of the Imagination. In *Hamlet* the supernatural power is the Ghost, which also starts the action agoing, and whose impelling force reaches to the end of the drama. The purely ethical conflict here lies in the Family—mainly between the uncle, who is the murderer, and the son, who is the avenger, of the murdered parent. But the character

of Hamlet changes this simple ethical pathos into a world of unreality, through subjective doubt, hesitation, reflection. Hence the injunction to avenge the ethical violation of his family comes from an unreal spectral shape — the Ghost.

✓ *MACBETH.*

The supernatural tinge which is given to *Macbeth* is always felt to be one of its most effective qualities. It transports us into a world so different from our own that sometimes we are at a loss to explain the acts and beliefs of its characters, but the mystery always heightens the impression. The coloring throughout is the same; it belongs, not merely to one person, but it is the element which envelops the whole play. All move in a world of imagination, in which man dwells among the weird forms of his own creation. The Poet has produced this wonderful effect in two ways. In the first place, Nature, whenever it is introduced, is made to prognosticate moral or spiritual occurrences and conflicts; it exists only as the sign of the future deed; it is filled with human purposes. The raven, the owl, the cricket, betoken darkly what is to come; the wind and tempest, the raging elements, always foreshadow the struggles of men. The minor characters, in particular, manifest this tendency—to see in Nature their fears and premonitions, and thus show the popular consciousness. But, in the second place, the converse procedure is far more effective, and, hence, far more prominent in the present drama—that is, the internal spirit projects its own workings into external forms, which rise up before it with all the certainty of a real object. Such are the Weird Sisters, the products of the imagination of those who behold them, but of the imagination which cannot recognize its own shapes as distinct from actual things.

These two processes are the complements of each other to a certain extent—the one unfolds the internal out of the external, the other unfolds the external out of the internal. Both indicate the supremacy of the imagination, whose great characteristic is to find already in Nature, or create purely out of itself, those objective forms which express the activities of mind.

It will be seen that man is thus controlled from without by the dim forebodings of the physical world, or by the phantoms of his own brain. A realm beyond human power or consciousness seems to exercise a governing influence over the affairs of life. But let not the other side be forgotten—it is a genuine attempt of the individual, in a certain stage of culture, to find or create some expression for what is true within him. Such a theme, however, is essentially epical, for it is the Epos which exhibits its characters as determined by external powers—by the god or the demon, by the fairy or the angel. The Drama, on the contrary, portrays man as acting through himself—as ruled by his own wishes, motives, ends, principles; hence in it the above-mentioned instrumentalities of the Epos must be always subordinated and explained into an internal element. Shakespeare has accordingly shown the inner movement of the mind alongside of the outward influence of the Weird Sisters; both are, in fact, different expressions of the same thing. There is thus a twofoldness running through the play—a double reflection of the same content—the reason whereof is that characters which are controlled by the shapes of their own imagination are portrayed, and, hence, it must be manifested what they seem to behold, and what they really do behold.

The drama can, therefore, be divided into two distinct worlds, which are the threads of the entire action—the supernatural and the natural. These terms are not completely antithetic, but they are sufficient to indicate the meaning which is intended to be conveyed. The supernatural world is that of the Weird Sisters, who seem to enter the action from the outside, and direct its course. They appear to Macbeth twice; the essential turning-points of his career are thus marked. The first time they incite him to guilt, the second time they lead him to retribution. Their two appearances thus divide the tragedy into two movements, the one of which unfolds the crime and the other its punishment. The natural world is composed of two well-defined groups. In the first group are those whom the Weird Sisters determine—Banquo, Macbeth, and, less directly and less strongly, Lady Macbeth. They manifest a regular gradation in their relations toward this external power; Banquo resists its temptations wholly; Lady Macbeth yields to them wholly, or, rather, brings to their aid her own strength of will; Macbeth fluctuates—resisting at first, but finally yielding. These characters also manifest the influence of imagination with greater or less intensity; they have, in particular, the double element above mentioned, for they are impelled, both by external shapes and by internal motives. The second group of the natural world comprises Duncan and the remaining persons of the play, who do not come in contact with the Weird Sisters, nor are directly influenced by their utterances. But this group is, for the most part, set in motion by the first group of the natural world; both move along together at first, and then collide. The external element thus reaches through

the entire play; the first impulse is given by the Weird Sisters; is received by one set of characters; through these is transmitted to a still different set of characters, who finally react, punish the usurper, and restore the rightful king. The first group, it ought to be added, disintegrates within itself, for Banquo refuses to listen to the advances of Macbeth, seeks to avenge the murder of Duncan, and, at last, is destroyed by his comrade in arms.

I. 1. The first thread — that of the Weird Sisters — can now be taken up and developed as it appears in the first general movement of the play. These beings dwell in a realm of their own — distinct, complete. Three things concerning them are to be noted: Their physical surroundings, their corporal appearance, and their moral qualities. Their coming is in thunder, lightning, and rain; their home seems to be in the tempest — in the wild convulsions of nature; their attendants are the lower, and often repulsive, animals. In bodily aspect they appear to represent the Ugly; they are withered, bony hags, unnatural monstrosities, without sex — opposite in every respect to the beautiful human form. Thus the negative elements of nature are manifested in them and in the atmosphere which envelops them. Corresponding to their looks and to their surroundings is their moral character; to them fair is foul, and foul is fair; they are portrayed in a state of hostility to man and what is useful to him; their delight is in darkness, confusion, destruction; malice and revenge enter deeply into their disposition — in general, they exhibit an inimical power, which is directed against mankind externally, and their world seems to include the hostile phases of both nature and spirit. The storms around them, and their own dispositions, are equally charged with harmful threatenings.

But their chief attribute is the gift of prophecy. This completes their influence — the influence of a prediction which is believed to be true — upon human conduct. If the conviction is once settled that the promise will turn out as foretold, it becomes, usually, a wonderful incentive to action; indeed, a prophecy may force its own fulfillment merely through its influence upon the mind. When Lady Macbeth says “thou shalt be what thou art promised,” it is manifest that she is going to do all in her power to make the prophetic utterance of the Weird Sisters a reality. Macbeth, too, is driven by the same impulse; once, however, he intimates the fatalistic view which would paralyze his activity:

✓ “If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me
Without my stir.”

But this was one of his fluctuations, which are carried through the whole First Act. Banquo, too, is powerfully wrought upon by the same influence, but he cannot be torn from his moral anchorage. Hence the subjective impression, created by a prediction which is believed to be true, is an important element in estimating these characters.

A question is likely to arise here in the mind of the reader — why are such beings endowed with the gift of prophecy? There is no doubt but that it can be logically inferred from their nature. They represent the totality of conditions, internal and external, which determine conduct to evil; impart to that totality a voice, and you have the prophetic Weird Sister. Given all the circumstances, the occurrence must take place; if, then, all these circumstances can find utterance, that utterance must be an announce-

ment of the event which is to happen. The powers which control and impel the individual are united together into an external form, and endowed with speech and personality in the case of the Weird Sister. When she gives expression to her own essence, it must be a prophecy, since she is just that which determines what is to be. Hence the Poet has introduced these existences to foretell also—that is their ultimate principle. It must, at the same time, be remembered that the gift of prophecy is a natural, rather than a spiritual, endowment; the individual feels in the surrounding circumstances that which is to come; it is not so much a clear, conscious knowledge, as a dark presentiment. Undoubtedly the present has within it the seeds of the future; let the totality of influences work upon a keenly receptive spirit, gifted with a strong imagination, and we have the seer. He is not the thinker who can deduce the future as the logical result of the present, but he is one who *feels* the Whole, and sees its consequences, and expresses them in highly-wrought, symbolical language. With the growth of the Understanding prophecy passes away, for two reasons—its place is supplied by a different faculty, and it loses its credit through the deception practised in its name. Such was its history among the old Greeks and Hebrews. But the prophet is still found among all peoples living in intimate connection with nature, for his is a mainly natural function.

Such, in general, seems to be the purport of the Weird Sisters—an external personification of the influences which impel the individual to evil. Now, what are these influences? The reader can easily ascertain them at the beginning of the play—a rebellion, two victorious generals, a weak king, who owes his kingdom to their valor, and

✓ who could not resist their power were they to turn against him. What would be more likely to stir up in them ambitious thoughts concerning the throne? Then comes the prophesy, with its partial fulfillment, when Macbeth is made Thane of Cawdor. Here, too, our credulity is not very heavily taxed; for, can anything be more natural than that Macbeth should receive the estates and title of the rebel whom he had put down? It will thus be manifest that these mysterious prophecies are the direct product of the circumstances — are just the thoughts most likely to arise in the minds of the two heroes as they return from their victory. Their ambition is appealed to most powerfully; will they yield to its promptings? That depends upon their subjective nature, and, hence, from this point each will show his own character, which will be developed in its proper relation.

Another difficulty now springs up for adjustment. If the Weird Sisters represent only that which is given in another form, are they not superfluous in the drama? To come directly to the issue: What is the purpose for which the Poet employs these shapes? The answer must give the most important point for the proper comprehension of the play. *It lies in the character of Banquo and Macbeth to see such specters.* Hence they are absolutely necessary for the characterization. The Weird Sisters are beheld by those two persons alone, and it must be considered as the deepest phase of their nature that they behold the unreal phantoms. Both have the same temptation; both are endowed with a strong imagination; both witness the same apparition. In other words, the external influences which impel to evil, to ambitious thoughts, to future kingship, are the same for both. In their excited

minds these influences take the form of the Weird Sisters. Such is the design of the Poet; he thus gives us at once an insight into the profoundest trait of their characters. In no other way could he portray so well the tendency to be controlled and victimized by the imagination, which sets up its shapes as actual, and then misleads men into following its fantastic suggestions. Lady Macbeth also is influenced by the Weird Sisters, though she had no immediate intercourse with them.

There is still another question which will probably be asked in this connection: Why has not the Poet himself told what he means? He could easily have explained the matter for his audience in a separate scene — in a soliloquy, or in almost any way. It is true that the reader who carefully weighs and compares the natural and supernatural threads will have no difficulty in finding the secret. Still, the author has scrupulously guarded the reality of the Weird Sisters; whenever they appear they are treated as positive objective existences. Mark the fact that two persons behold them at the same time, address them, and are addressed by them. Now, if they were seen by only one person, or by each person at different times, there would be no riddle; everybody would at once say it is a subjective phantom. Such is the case when the ghost of Banquo appears to Macbeth, but is seen by nobody else, though a number of guests with Lady Macbeth are present. Here, then, is no problem. The Poet has, therefore, taken special care to preserve the air of reality in these shapes. For such a procedure he has a most excellent reason, one that lies at the very basis of Tragedy. He wishes to place his audience under the same influences as his hero, and involve them in the same doubts and conflicts. We,

too, must look upon the Weird Sisters with the eyes of Macbeth and Banquo; we may not believe in them, or we may be able to explain them—still the great dramatic object is to portray characters which do behold them and believe in them. The audience, therefore, must feel the same problem in all its depth and earnestness, and must be required to face the enigma of these appearances; for a character can be tragic to the spectators only when they are assailed by its difficulties and involved in its collision. It would have destroyed the whole effect of the Weird Sisters had their secret been plainly shown from the beginning. In fact, when the audience stand above the hero, and are made acquainted with all his complications, mistakes, and weaknesses, the realm of Comedy begins—the laugh is excited instead of the tear. We make merry over men pursuing that which we know to be a disguise or a shadow. To persons who can remain uninfluenced by their imagination this representation may appear ridiculous, even in its present shape. Few people, however, have so much passivity and so little poetry.

Such seem to be the three essential points requiring to be elucidated here, namely, the significance of the Weird Sisters, the ground of their employment by the Poet, and the reason why their secret is not revealed to the audience. It is to be observed that every explanation of them must show that they are subjective forms in the minds of those who see them. That is just the purport of their interpretation; otherwise, they can be left simply as they are, in their objective reality. He who believes in ghosts, or thinks that Shakespeare believed literally in ghosts, has no difficulty to solve, and, hence, needs no explanation. Still further, those who held that the Poet merely employed

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an existing superstition for external effect, without intending to put any sense into these shapes, have also got rid of the problem, and, it may be added, have got rid of Shakespeare, too.

The play, very properly, opens with the witch scene, which represents the mustering of the hostile influences. The Weird Sisters want to meet Macbeth; no other person is mentioned by them, for he is the one who is mainly determined by their power, and is the central character of the drama. They are the primordial forces which set the whole work in motion; this impulse being given, we must now be introduced to the natural world—the object upon which the supernatural agencies exert their influence.

2. This is the second thread, whose development must now be given, extending to the second appearance of the Weird Sisters. Here we shall keep our attention on Macbeth, as the chief figure around which the others move. His career will be shown in three different crises, which, however, flow from one another in regular order—the conflict with himself, the murder of Duncan, the murder of Banquo. Each takes up about an act, and the three, hence, occupy the first three acts, nearly.

On the other hand, there is also an internal conflict, which exhibits Macbeth struggling with his own conviction, for he knows that his deed is wrong, and also that retribution will follow—“we still have judgment here,” says he. But the Weird Sisters, combined with his wife, are victorious over his moral nature, which is aided by Banquo; both the former appeal to his ambition, which he himself confesses to be the real motive of his conduct:

—“I have no spur
To prick the sides of mine intent, but only
Vaulting ambition—”

Which can be taken as his own subjective interpretation of the Weird Sisters.

The conviction now being overborne, the deed follows, namely, the murder of the King. Herein he violates, not only his own profoundest belief, but also contradicts his former life. He once put down traitors; now he has become a traitor himself; his act has annihilated his previous honorable career. He assails the existence of the State which he once saved. But here he cannot stop. He proceeds to destroy the man who will not be a traitor with him—who will not also violate his own conviction, and contradict his own acts of loyal devotion. Banquo is true to the old King, and is ready to avenge his death; he cannot, therefore, be true to Macbeth. The latter also must get rid of those who do not accept his principle of treason and murder; they are a standing cause of fear and reproach. Thus it will be seen that Macbeth, the former savior of the King, not only slays him, but also slays those who would save him. Macbeth, swayed by external influences working upon a favorable disposition, has turned into the opposite of himself—has become the complete contradiction both of his former action and of his present conviction.

Still, that conviction is not lost, nor, indeed, inactive; those stern words have expressed his profoundest faith:

—“That we but teach
Bloody instructions which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor; this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips.”

If ever there was belief in retribution, it is declared here. But how will this conviction make itself felt? Through the imagination. It has already been seen

how Macbeth projects his internal states of mind into shapes seemingly real. Imagination is his peculiar psychological trait; ambition worked through the imagination, and retribution must work through the imagination. Hence we can account for the voices which he hears after the murder of Duncan, and the sights which he sees after the murder of Banquo. That mental quality which beholds the Weird Sisters is the same as that which beholds air-drawn daggers and ghosts. This is, therefore, the deep consistency of the character. At first temptation, in the forms of the imagination, assists in leading him into crime, and then remorse punishes him, also in the forms of the imagination. The appearances always accompany his guilty act; they are the Furies which he tries to drive away by crime, but which always return with tenfold terror.

(a.) We can now take the play in hand and trace these principles in its incidents with greater minuteness. We find, at the very beginning, that there has been a terrific collision in the State; a great revolt has taken place, in which many of the King's subjects, aided by foreigners, have participated. But this revolt has been put down, mainly by the strong arm of Macbeth, assisted, however, by Banquo. The breach is healed; the throne is saved; peace again reigns. Such is the background upon which the action is portrayed. Now comes the internal struggle, and we are to witness the influences which will turn Macbeth into the most direct contradiction with himself. What has he been doing? Putting down traitors to the King. But next he becomes himself a traitor to the same King—does the very thing for which he had just destroyed an army. What brought about this change? The tracing of

this development in his character will constitute the first crisis of this second thread, terminating in the surrender of his own conviction.

✓ Banquo and Macbeth are returning from the scene of their triumph, filled with the glory of their deed. What honors now are not within their reach! They are truly greater than the King — they have saved his realm. Then the Weird Sisters appear in their horrid shapes and prophesy the future of the two warriors. The one shall be King himself, the other shall have children who shall be Kings. But the moment the shapes are asked concerning their origin and purpose they vanished, for the answer would reveal their true nature. Both the men are skeptical at first, yet both are pleased; the utterances of the Weird Sisters seem to harmonize quite with their own thoughts. Now comes the sudden confirmation — Macbeth is the Thane of Cawdor, just as one of the witches hailed him; the Weird Sisters are henceforth regarded as prophetic.

What shall we do with this passage? Here is the point where the supernatural world touches the natural, and, hence, it constitutes the main difficulty of the play. The Poet has told enough for us to see his meaning, though he is by no means going to declare openly his mystery. It is a problem which we must and can solve. To repeat what was before indicated, the ambitious feelings and possibilities of both these men are given an objective form by their imagination, which, to them, has all the force of a reality. It is like a dream when the image is actual, for the imagination gives full validity to its content, if the reason be not present and correct its vagaries. Not a few persons in ordinary life take that which they imagine to

be real. Under strong excitement it is, perhaps, possible to every person. At any rate, such is the mental quality of Macbeth and Banquo; they project their own imaginings into reality; they see witches. Even they at first question the existence of these beings. It is curious that the latter disappear so speedily when their origin is sought for. That, evidently, cannot be given to the two men, for it would lead back to their own minds, and thus would destroy the objective reality of these shapes. The situation of Macbeth and Banquo, as the victorious generals of a weak King, calls up, very naturally, vague feelings of future greatness. That which the witches prophesy is in such complete harmony with the subjective feelings natural to the occasion, that the one is a picture of the other. But it lies in the character of the two men that these feelings take the form of the specters here represented. The deeds imagined—such as the murder of the King and usurpation of the realm—are repugnant to the moral natures of both, hence the Weird Sisters are evil and ugly to both. Both, too, have that predominance of imagination which tricks them into taking its shapes for realities. This trait is fundamental, and is preserved throughout the play.

But, though both possess the above-mentioned moral element, yet each has it in a different degree. Now their characters begin to separate, and to individualize themselves. When the witches have announced the future greatness of the two heroes, Banquo tramples all wicked designs, or even wicked surmisings, under foot; his moral nature asserts its complete superiority over the promptings of ambition. Not so Macbeth. He still cherishes the thought—dismisses it at one moment, and calls it up the

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But the prophecy has set another influence at work which is irresistible. Lady Macbeth will now supply the element the lack of which caused such hesitation in her husband. She is introduced reading a letter which relates the promises of the Weird Sisters; these promises are just what she desired. But she knows the character of her husband, and fears that he will still be irresolute, since the conflict between the good and the bad is so evenly balanced in his mind. He has the ambition, but hesitates at the wickedness. Her function now is to pour “her spirits into his ear,” and destroy every scruple. But even she feels her sex to be inconsistent with cruelty; she, therefore, abjures womanhood. Her address to the “spirits that tend on mortal thoughts,” and the “murdering ministers” of the air, would show, however, a lurking belief in the world beyond, and an underlying basis of character in the imagination. This, hereafter, becomes more apparent.

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But no sooner has he resolved not to murder the King than his wife appears. She reinforces with her determination the evil side of her husband's character. Her argument is that of immorality — you are coward not to be that which you desire to be. Now, morality is quite the opposite, namely, to suppress desire when inconsistent with what is right. His first answer is the true one: "I dare do all that may become a man; who dares do more is none." But she, aiding his ambition, which had almost turned the scale without her, changes his mind. His hesitation was caused by the conflict between conviction and desire; she reinforces desire with her intense purpose. Banquo subordinates his desires, and even his thoughts, to his moral conviction, while Lady Macbeth tramples upon every moral consideration to attain the goal of her ambition. Macbeth hangs between the two; he has the conviction of Banquo, but the ambition of his wife. She says:

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(*b.*) Again, in the beginning of the Second Act, the Poet touches the old chord—the similar and the dissimilar traits in the character of Banquo and Macbeth. Both have the same strong imagination; Banquo is disturbed by wicked dreams in the night, and haunted by bad fancies during the day, but he vigorously suppresses every sinful inclination. Macbeth is also possessed with his imagination; his thought and his purposes at once take on the form of an objective image. He sees a dagger, which directs him to the King, hovering in the air, when he has resolved upon the murder. The bloody business always informs thus to his eyes. Though he questions the reality, and seems, at times, to believe in the unreality of these shapes, still they have none the less power over him.

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The murderous deed becomes known to the outer world, which enters at the porter scene, and suspicion, especially that of the King's sons, attaches at once to Macbeth. It is also to be noticed what use is made of superstition. Nature was filled with strife; the imaginative, superstitious man transfers the conflicts of the spiritual world to physical phenomena. They indicate what lies in the future; both natural and moral occurrences have the same cause in some external power. The wild night, lamentings in the air, the clamor of the obscure bird, darkness in daytime, the falcon killed by the mousing owl, the horses contending against obedience and eating one another, are some of the portents which the time brought forth. But, in reality, it is man, who, in this manner, projects his own thoughts and feelings into nature, which, thus, is merely the language to express what is going on within. Such manner of expression must not be judged too harshly; the human mind in certain of its stages has, indeed, no other means of utterance. It is easy to deride it as superstition, but it is better to comprehend it as a genuine, though not the most exalted, phase of human spirit. ✓

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(c.) Duncan is murdered ; Macbeth is King through treason. Now the third crisis in his history begins its movement. The difference between him and Banquo has already been noticed ; that difference has developed into opposition—nay, into hostility. Starting from the same point, endowed with the same imagination, Banquo has suppressed his evil ambition, while Macbeth has allowed the wicked purpose to control him. The result is a conflict between them ; for the moral nature of Banquo is outraged at Duncan's murder, whose author he strongly suspects to be Macbeth. Hence the latter fears “the royalty of his nature” and his “wisdom ;” but, above all, Macbeth feels “that, under him, my genius is rebuked”—referring to the difference in their moral characters.

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After the death of Banquo the same struggles of the imagination occur which took place after the death of

Duncan, only with greater intensity. Previously it was the imagined voice of retribution, but in the present case the murdered man appears in person, and takes his seat at the table of guests. The imagination now has all the force of reality; it controls Macbeth's action, even in the presence of company. Through it Banquo himself returns to earth, reveals his murder, and, to a certain extent, accomplishes his revenge. Macbeth cannot banish his image as he did the air-drawn dagger. The wife again performs her previous function—that of suppressing the imagination of her husband, but its power has got beyond her control. Then she tries to excuse his conduct to the guests, who are excited and full of suspicion—in fact, the secret is as good as told. The power of the imagination has now reached its climax; we behold it completely controlling an individual by its phantoms. Macbeth has been fighting them all along; he has sought to destroy them by crime, but that has only aroused them the more. We shall thus find a regular gradation in the influence of the imagination over him, from the first thought of the throne to the murder of Banquo.

We have now carried down the whole action, with its two threads, through the first movement, which exhibits the guilt of Macbeth. The theme is, in general, his transition from being the savior of the realm into just the opposite—its destroyer; this transition has been shown in its three leading phases, namely, the conflict with himself, with the King, with the loyal supporter of the King. On the one hand, his ambition, working through the imagination, has created a supernatural world, which, together with the strength of will of Lady Macbeth, has inclined him to the evil side of his nature; on the other

hand, his moral conviction, also working through the imagination, inflicts upon him, along with every act of guilt, an internal retribution. We are now prepared to take up the second movement.

II. The turning-point of the drama begins with the second appearance of the Weird Sisters. Macbeth has reached the goal of his ambition through crime; the current now sets in toward punishment. The theme of this second movement is, therefore, retribution—not, however, the internal retribution of the imagination, which has already been portrayed, but the external retribution, which brings home to the guilty man the true equivalent of his deeds. Here, too, we observe the division into the same threads which were pointed out in the first movement. The supernatural world, composed of the Weird Sisters, again makes its appearance, retaining its former character, but changing, to a certain extent, its purpose. The natural world still has its two groups—the one of which is made up of Macbeth and his wife, the guilty pair for whom retribution is prepared, though in different ways; the other of which is composed of the injured fugitives, who return, with the aid of foreigners, and avenge their wrongs.

Before entering upon the main topic an important preliminary question should be brought up and discussed. Macbeth says that he wishes to go again to the Weird Sisters for a consultation. What are the grounds for this second interview with them? The former prophecy has been fulfilled—Macbeth is upon the throne. He naturally asks himself, what has the future in store for me now? Just as he before projected his thoughts into those prophetic shapes, so must he do at present; this is the peculiar element of his character. Moreover, two questions

disturb him. First, will the promise of the Weird Sisters to Banquo, concerning the latter's posterity, be fulfilled? Macbeth has tried to forestall that prophecy by the murder of Banquo; yet, in his own case, a similar prediction has turned out true; hence he may well be anxious about his success. But the second question is far more important. It is, will there be any retribution for my deeds? Macbeth must thus interrogate himself, for it has already been seen that he possesses the strongest faith in retribution. This belief is, in reality, deeper than his belief in the Weird Sisters, though he tries to cover it and extinguish it by a reliance upon their prophecies. Such is his mental condition, which will again arouse the activity of his imagination; as he previously saw and heard the seeresses of the air when returning from the victorious field of battle, so he will see and hear them a second time concerning his destiny.

1. Accordingly, the supernatural world — the first thread — appears. A new personage is now introduced into it — Hecate, the queen of the witches. Her function is particularly marked; she is to change the previous course of events. Hence she reproves the Weird Sisters for their former favors to Macbeth, who is but a “wayward son.” She will do differently; she proposes to deceive him by magic slights, and “draw him on to his confusion.” Her means is to produce in his mind “security,” a confident temerity which results from an absolute reliance upon a prediction. Thus he is led to “spurn fate, scorn death, and bear his hopes above wisdom, grace, and fear” — an exact statement of what is to follow. The “hell-broth” is now cooked before our eyes. All the elements of nature most horrible and hostile to man are thrown into the

cauldron ; the future is being literally stewed together out of its diverse ingredients ; the purpose, at least, of these beings is clearly revealed in the ominous chorus — “ Double, double, toil and trouble.” This world has a complete activity of its own ; though every part may not be symbolical, yet the whole certainly is ; in fact, the queen, Hecate, who may be considered the supreme power, has not only revealed her design, but also the means of its execution. She represents the new direction of the drama towards retribution.

These beings are, as before stated, an embodiment of the influences which impel the individual to evil. They will drive Macbeth on from one wicked act to another till they thrust him into the embrace of his punishment. It must not be forgotten that it lies in the character of Macbeth to see such phantoms ; his own subjective temptations, and even desires, assume these forms. Still, the Poet is most careful in guarding the reality of the Weird Sisters ; he removes them, as far as possible, from any direct connection with Macbeth’s mental condition. For instance, their prophecy about the moving of Birnam Wood seems in no way to have sprung from his mind — at least, consciously ; nor, were the circumstances of Macduff’s birth known to him when the prediction was announced that no man “ of woman born ” would destroy his life. These and other occurrences, which are difficult to explain in their particular shape, are, in general, the Poet’s means for giving a strong and unquestioned reality to his airy seeresses. That his procedure herein is true to the highest conception of Dramatic Art was attempted to be shown in the first part of the present essay. His audience must also be compelled to solve the problem of

the Weird Sisters, as well as his hero; if their secret were openly proclaimed, the tragic element of the play would be destroyed.

Next, let us consider how and what the Weird Sisters communicate to Macbeth. In general, their utterances are the internal workings of Macbeth's own mind in an imaginative form, which, however, he himself does not recognize as his own. This is even hinted in the passage where the witch says to him: "He (the apparition) knows thy thought"—that is, Macbeth's mind was known without his needing to tell what it was. Again, he says "thou harpst my fear aright," concerning Macduff, which indicates the exact correspondence between his own mental state and the warning of the phantom. In like manner can be explained the injunctions of the other two apparitions: "Be bloody, bold, and resolute," and "be lion-mettled, proud;" they spring from his character, hardened by crime and audacious from success. The two prophecies also are an expression of his blind confidence in his own destiny, as "none of woman born shall harm Macbeth," and "Macbeth shall never vanquished be until great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill shall come against him." This is just what Hecate proposed, in making him "spurn fate;" through illusion she causes him to believe that he is above responsibility—out of the reach of retribution; he is brought to rely on destiny, without regard to the ethical nature of the deed. These passages, therefore, fully prefigure Macbeth's internal development.

Another side of the same description must be noticed. What is the signification of the three apparitions which rise up before Macbeth? One is the crowned child, Mal-

colm, who will take away his kingdom; another is the bloody child, Macduff, who will slay him; the third is his own head severed from the body. They prognosticate the fate of Macbeth in its three phases—dethronement, death, decapitation. Yet these phantoms give him advice and determine his conduct—that is, his own destroyers tell him that he cannot be destroyed; this is just the cause of his destruction. It strengthens his fatal reliance upon his supposed destiny, irrespective of the ethical nature of his deeds.

But, in one respect, he is disappointed in the response which he receives. He learns that Banquo's children, and not his own, will become the occupants of the throne. He has, therefore, not succeeded in forestalling the first prophecy of the Weird Sisters; his murder of Banquo has availed him nothing. Nor ought he to have expected anything else. The Weird Sisters could not be made to predict truly in his own case, but falsely in another similar case. His failure leads him to curse these prophetic shapes; he is now done with them forever. From this time forward Macbeth seeks no more the Weird Sisters, nor is he harrassed any longer with the specters of his imagination. "No more sights," he sternly says; he will drown his mental phantoms in a whirl of activity; he will fight till every enemy be swept away. At once he proposes to get rid of the suspected Macduff.

Such is the supernatural world of the second part. Its origin is seen to lie in the fact that the first prophecy had run out, and that other questions were pressing upon Macbeth's mind for an answer. In accordance with his peculiar mental trait, his thought and anxiety for the future call up the Weird Sisters in his imagination. Their

purpose is distinctly declared to be retribution, which can only be the consequence of his own deeds, and which, it must not be forgotten, is his own deepest conviction. Still, he blunts and destroys that conviction for a time, because he so wills; hence he clutches the two ambiguous prophecies, or, to speak more truly, creates them. Also, the response concerning the posterity of Banquo, which so excites his anger, is nothing but the logic of his own career and of his own thought.

2. (*a.*) We shall next consider the natural world in its first group—the guilty couple for whom punishment is now prepared. Lady Macbeth in person is introduced but once—in the famous night-walking scene. The objection is often made that this scene is not motived with sufficient plainness; that the leap into it is not at all accounted for by her preceding conduct. But a careful survey of her previous actions and sayings will refute the charge. It has been above noted that she cites, and seems to believe in, the prognostications of nature; that she calls up the image of her father, when about to murder the grooms, and is, thereby, deterred from the act; that once she gives way to her suppressed emotional character and faints. But the most striking instance of her belief in the supernatural world is found in the passage where she invokes the “spirits that tend on mortal thoughts,” and the “murdering ministers” of the air. The predominance of her imagination is most emphatically brought out in these places; in this respect she was, no doubt, intended by the Poet to rank in quite the same category with Macbeth and Banquo. Her self-command, however, is sufficient to suppress her own tendency to fantastic creation, as well as that of her husband. This is just her function in the first

part of the drama. In the presence of Macbeth the stern, cool understanding always seems to control her actions, except the one time. But when she is alone she cannot help manifesting the deepest trait of her nature.

Therefore, in her waking moments, Lady Macbeth can temporarily crush the workings of her imagination by her colossal strength of will. But the hour comes when this fierce grip is relaxed — when the mind is freed from its central controlling power, and its activities rush out in all directions like the released winds of *Æolus*. Then we may expect that the suppressed imagination will exhibit itself in its native might, or, indeed, will burst forth with tenfold fury, as the fires of the pent-up volcano. The Poet simply gives the fact; he brings before us Lady Macbeth awake when this trait is smothered, and Lady Macbeth asleep when it must be manifested in its highest potency. There would seem to be no very great necessity for delineating any intervening stage of her mind — in fact, there is none.

But what now will be the subject which her imagination will seize upon in sleep? Note its power over the physical system; she rises out of bed, walks about, writes upon a piece of paper, speaks aloud — indeed, quite equals her waking state. Its theme, however, will be that which has made the strongest impression upon it, namely, the scenes of that eventful night when Duncan was murdered, together with their consequences. It will reproduce with striking fidelity the two sides of her nature, which have before been noticed. For, in the first place, her self-command appears here adumbrated in her dreams; she quiets her husband, reproves his fear, suppresses the phantoms of his mind, and directs his actions after the murder.

But, in the second place, the great and important element of this representation is the *imagination* portraying, not her assumed, but her actual, mental condition. The rubbing of her hands to wash out the gory spot, and her inability to get them clean, the smell of blood upon them, the sigh when she finds her attempts ineffectual, are the most terrific symbols of remorse. The culmination is, "the Thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now?" Lady Macbeth, too, is a wife; her own domestic relation has been murdered—here is the punishment. Again we behold conscience working through the imagination. The doctor, who is the interpreter for the audience in this scene, tells the secret: "More needs she the divine than the physician;" her ailment is not bodily, but spiritual. Also her fluctuation between the two above-mentioned elements of her character is to be observed; for it is, no doubt, to a certain extent, a picture of what she actually was in her waking state.

In the case of Lady Macbeth, as well as in the case of her husband, we behold the internal retribution accomplished through the imagination. But her it destroys; she cannot withstand its attacks, nor avoid them by outward activity. We must consider her to have been left alone some length of time—"since his majesty went into the field." She thus was handed over to her own thoughts—no doubt her most terrible enemies. She began with unsexing herself, in which step is contained the germ of her fate; for to unsex the woman is to destroy the woman as woman. Abjuring her emotional nature she proceeded to cruelty and crime. At last we see her in the process of being eaten up by the Furies of her own creation. The exact manner of her death is not

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The somewhat prevalent notion of making love the mainspring of Lady Macbeth's actions, and of seeing in her the tender, devoted wife, who committed the most horrible crimes merely out of affection for her husband, is ridiculous, and is, one may well assert, contradicted by the whole tenor of the play. The very point emphasized in her characterization at the beginning is that she abjured womanhood, with its tenderness and love, and prayed to be filled, "from the crown to the toe, top full of direst cruelty," and her woman's breasts to be milked for gall! To be the wife is clearly not her highest ambition — that she is already ; but it is to be the queen. There is no consistency or unity in her character if love be its leading principle. To this passion the husband may justly lay claim, but not the wife, who suppresses her emotional nature.

The second person of this group is Macbeth, whose career we shall now take up again and trace to its close. Macduff had excited suspicion by absenting himself from the royal feast, and previously he had sworn with Banquo to avenge the murder of Duncan. But he discovers his danger and flees. His wife and children are left behind, and are destroyed in his stead. This is the third great crime of Macbeth. He has quite run through the scale of human guilt ; he has destroyed the foundation of State in the murder of the rightful king ; he has destroyed loyalty to just authority in the murder of Banquo ; now he destroys the Family in the murder of its innocent members. Logically his criminal career is now complete ; consequently the Poet has given no other special case of his cruel acts. Still, the process continues, and must continue, as is indicated in a general way by the statements that every

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Here is exactly stated the difference between his two mental states, and its cause. Familiarity with crime has hardened his thoughts; repetition of guilt has seared his conscience. Hence no retributive ghosts appear after the murder of Macduff's family. But his whole mind is seared, too — it is a desolation; "life is but a walking shadow;" "I have lived long enough;" "life is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;" "I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun," etc. That is, since the cessation of his imagination his spirit is dead — an inward desert — because his imagination was the center of his spiritual activity. There is, however, one object to which he still shows attachment — it is his wife. She dies — the victim of "thick-coming fancies;" there remains only his dependence upon the two prophecies; these also break down, for, though their reality is carefully maintained, they are merely symbols of his external reliance upon his imagined destiny, to the disregard of all ethical conduct. He tries to believe that he will not perish, no matter what he does. Hence the prophecies are a delusion — in fact, his own delusion. It will thus be seen that both Macbeth and his wife have their common psychological principle in the imagination, though its development in each is just the opposite. In the first movement of the drama Lady Macbeth suppresses her, while Macbeth yields to his, imagination; in the second the reverse takes place.

(b.) The second group of the natural world — the avengers from abroad — has already appeared, in order to inflict upon Macbeth the external retribution for his deeds. The fugitives from Scotland went to England, where the good King Edward — whose wonderful virtues are dwelt upon — reigned in contrast to the wicked King Macbeth. From

this happy realm must come the relief ; hence its introduction. There is Malcolm, son of the murdered Duncan, and Macduff, father of the murdered family — but we miss Fleance, son of Banquo, who ought to be present to make the list of avengers complete. The foreigner, Siward, is added, who, however, loses his son for his interference. Macbeth is undeceived ; he finds that the Weird Sisters

— “ Are juggling fiends
That palter with us in a double sense —
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.”

But the desperate soldier perishes fighting bravely.

The disruption in the State is healed ; Malcolm is King ; all are restored. The external retribution is now complete.

Shakespeare has not introduced a double guilt into this drama — hence the fate of only one series of characters is adequately motivated. For the death of Duncan, of Banquo, and of Macduff's family, there can be found no justification from their deeds. Critics have sought to make out a case against them, but without success. They have committed no ethical violation worthy of death ; they are innocent beings overwhelmed in a catastrophe from without ; and this is deeply consistent with the form and movement of the play, which exhibits fate — external determination. The Weird Sisters, the instruments of destiny, give Macbeth his impulse ; he is driven upon these guiltless victims, who fall because they stand in the way of a mighty force. Such is the outward form — though it must not be thought that thus Macbeth is released from the responsibility of his act. The inner truth is that these shapes are himself — his own desires, his own ambition.

The peculiarity of the present work is that the ethical

elements, usually the most prominent, are withdrawn into the background to make room for another principle. To be sure, these elements cannot be absent, and they have been pointed out in their proper place. The conflict in the State and the destruction of the Family are also seen in the career of Macbeth. But the main interest is psychological; the activities of the mind appear to leap at once into independent forms of the imagination. Although Macbeth knows abstractly of his own ambition, still his chief temptation seems to spring from the phantoms of the air; and, though an external punishment is brought home to him, still his retribution, as well as that of his wife, is mainly found in the fantastic workings of the brain. Judging by its language, its treatment, and its theme, we may call this play, distinctively, the Tragedy of the Imagination.

HAMLET.

SECTION I. — PREFATORY DISCUSSIONS.

Hamlet is the Sphinx of modern literature. The difference of opinion concerning its purport and character is quite as general as the study of the work. Persons of the same grade of culture and ability hold the most contradictory theories respecting its signification; even the same persons change their notions about it at different periods of life. To others, again, it remains an unsolved mystery. Yet, curious to say, everybody recurs to this play as if it possessed some strange fascination over the mind — as if it had some secret nourishment for the spirit of man which always drew him back to take repeated draughts. A work to which intelligence thus clings must be something more than an idle riddle — in fact, it must lay open some of the profoundest problems of life. Even to appreciate and comprehend such a problem when stated requires no ordinary degree of culture and thought. Every individual brings his own intellectual capacity to the comprehension of the play, and it is no wonder that people differ so much, since they have so many different mental measuring-rods. If one man has a deeper or shallower insight than another, there must be a corresponding difference of opinion. Also, advancing years bring along great spiritual mutations; new views of life and broader experience must reveal different phases in *Hamlet*, if it be that absolute work which enlightened mankind generally believe it to be. Hence

we may account for the frequent occurrence of a change of opinion in the same person at the several periods of life. Indeed, a man ought, perhaps, to change his opinion concerning this drama once every decade during the first forty years of existence ; it would, in most cases, be a good sign of increased culture and maturer intellect. According to our own premises, therefore, we can hardly expect to satisfy all, or the majority, or even ourselves, after the lapse of years, and to harmonize the many conflicting opinions. But we intend to grapple honestly with its difficulties, which are both many and great, and attempt to state the thought which gives unity to its widely-diversified parts.

The play is, therefore, a series of difficulties, of perplexing questions, concerning which opinions in every way contradictory have been held. The most important, as well as the most disputed, of these problems is about the insanity of Hamlet. But, after taking away this question of insanity, there still remains a very great difference of opinion. In regard to the character of Hamlet, one man considers him to be courageous—another, cowardly ; one, that he is moral in the highest degree—another, that he is wicked ; one, that he possesses vast energy of will—another, that he has little or no power of action. The same diversity of judgment exists in regard to the play as a Whole. It has been condemned as the wild work of a barbarian ; it has been praised as the highest product of modern Art. Between these two extremes almost every shade of opinion has had its representative. Even Goethe denies its unity ; he declares that there are many things—such as the story of Fortinbras, the journey of Laertes to France, the sending of Hamlet to England—which have no justification in the thought of the work. That is, if it

be a true totality, we must find some higher solution, and some more adequate and comprehensive statement, than that of Goethe. In fact, most of these conflicting opinions may, in this way, be harmonized; they are not absolutely false, but only partial, views, which become erroneous by laying claim to universality.

Hamlet is, indeed, a sort of universal man; in him every individual sees on some side a picture of himself; each one bears away what he comprehends, and often thinks it is all. If Goethe—whose criticism of this play in *Wilhelm Meister* is undoubtedly the best that has yet been given—complained of the many external and unnecessary incidents, our difficulty, be it said with all the respect due to so great a genius, is quite of the opposite kind—we are compelled to supply so much. The Poet has left so many faint outlines, and even wide gaps, to be filled up by the thought and imagination, that we would find here, if anywhere, a blemish in the construction of the drama. He ought rather to have taken a whole volume and a whole life for his work, as Goethe himself did in his *Faust*. But the defense of Shakespeare is at hand. He wrote for representation, which is an essential side of the drama; hence the limits which it imposed upon his Art must be respected. In the space of a few hours he develops what might be the theme of the grandest epic. Hence he has dropped much that would otherwise be necessary, and the missing links must be supplied if one wishes to grasp the connecting thought of the piece. It will be seen that, for this reason, we shall often have to go outside of the poem and bridge over the chasms—for which work, however, the Poet always furnishes the hint. But let it not be understood that we are thus correcting the

defects of the play, or even completing what was before imperfect; besides the presumptuousness of the attempt, such a proceeding is destructive of all true criticism, whose duty it cannot be to supply the deficiencies of a work of Art, or to see in it things which do not exist.

I. At the very threshold of the subject stands the question of Hamlet's insanity. Was it real or feigned? If he is insane, and so intended by the Poet, let us shut the book and say no more; for, certainly, there is nothing more to be said. But such is not the case. Art is the expression of Reason, and that, too, of the Reason of a nation, of an age, of an epoch; eliminate this principle—pray what is left? Criticism, if it be true to its highest end, points out and unfolds the rational element in a drama or other work of Art; but here it could only say, this poem professedly depicts the Irrational—hence the Ugly. A piece which has as its theme the Ugly cannot well possess much beauty. (Moreover, what delight or instruction can there be in the portraiture of the Irrational? Think of the choicest spirits of this and former generations finding spiritual nourishment in the capricious oddities of a madman! In fact, this play would thus become repugnant alike to the intellectual and the moral nature of man; repugnant to his intellectual nature, for it would be stripped of all true intelligence in the dethronement of Reason; repugnant to his moral nature, for insanity destroys responsibility, and thus Hamlet could in nowise be held accountable for his acts.)

Here lies the greatest objection to the above-mentioned view; it takes away the notion of responsibility, and, thereby, blasts the very germ of the play. That the Poet intends no such thing is very evident. Hamlet has

the profoundest feeling of duty — the most sensitive moral nature. Moreover, the termination of his career at the end of the play shows how Shakespeare would have us regard the matter. To destroy an insane man for his deeds would be, not merely an absurdity, but a moral horror.

The view that Hamlet is mad has lately been promulgated with much emphasis by several physicians who have had large experience in the treatment of the insane. Their method of procedure is curious — resting upon a wholly physical basis, though they are judging a work of Art. They carefully reckon up the symptoms, and show the various stages — evidently regarding the unfortunate Prince as one of their own patients, and the whole play as a treatise on insanity. One is at first inclined to think that these doctors ought to take the place of their patients, and be incarcerated for a while in an insane asylum. Yet we should not, perhaps, blame them; for does not everybody read into *Hamlet* his own life-experience and culture? Why not let these men read into it their own insanity in peace?

A modification of this opinion is that Hamlet is deranged in some of his faculties, though not in all — is mad at times, with lucid intervals, etc. These views are hardly worthy of a detailed examination; in them all definiteness fades away; their supporters are evidently on both sides, and on neither. But a true criterion may be laid down to guide our wandering steps in this trackless waste of uncertainty. *Hamlet is never so mad as not to be responsible.* Hence, with any ordinary definition of insanity, he is not mad at all. He has, undoubtedly, weaknesses — so has every mortal. He possesses finite sides to his character and intel-

ligence ; otherwise, he could hardly perish as the hero of a tragedy. A definition of insanity which includes Hamlet would sweep at least three-fourths of mankind into the mad-house. That he is lacking in the element of will, that he is melancholy in his feelings, that his reasoning is often unsound, and, in fact, so intended by himself, is all very true, but does not make out a case of insanity. He assumes madness for a special purpose, and says so when he speaks of his antic disposition ; nothing can be plainer than this purpose throughout the entire play. He took a mask to conceal his own designs, to discover the secrets of the King and to deceive the court, and, particularly, Polonius, the sharp-scented detective, who was sure to be placed upon his track.

His ultimate object was to find out the guilt of the King ; for this purpose he deemed it necessary to divert the attention of the court — headed and guided in its opinions by Polonius — as far as possible from the design of which he might otherwise be suspected. But why should he take the special form of insanity to hide his plans ? This was determined by the character of Polonius, who was no fool, but very astute in his particular calling — who had, therefore, to be caught in his own net. That trait of his character in which all others were resumed was cunning. Now, Hamlet was known to the court as a man of profound candor and earnestness, and disinclined to all trickery and deceit ; hence, to meet Polonius, he had to reverse his entire nature and reputation. But how would everybody regard this sudden transformation ? Either in its true light as a disguise, in which case the whole design of it would fail, or that the man had lost his wits. Hence Hamlet, in order to conceal his plans and thoughts, had

to counterfeit madness ; such was the impression that he was compelled to make upon the world. Thus he had a veil, beneath which he could be cunning, too, and indulge in all sorts of vagaries without exciting suspicion, and could thwart Polonius and the other court spies on all sides.

Moreover, Hamlet was intimate with Ophelia, the daughter of Polonius, and had been dismissed by the father's orders ; here was just what was wanted, namely, a ground to give Polonius for the theory of Hamlet's madness—love for Ophelia. This ground Hamlet furnishes him ; hence the self-conceit of the old courtier, mixed with paternal pride, quite led him astray ; besides, he did not, and could not, comprehend the profound ethical nature of Hamlet, who had a deep, underlying motive for the disguise. Still, Polonius sometimes half suspects the truth, for he cannot but observe that there is method in Hamlet's madness.

Such are the reasons why Hamlet had to feign insanity. He was the self-chosen instrument of a mighty design, which, however, for a time, required concealment ; concealment demanded cunning ; cunning was the reversal of his entire rational nature ; still, to carry out his end, he had to submit to the circumstances, and, hence, to assume the garb of the Irrational. How perfectly our Poet has succeeded in portraying this disguise is shown by the fact that quite a number of modern critics have been deceived as badly as Polonius. They maintain that Hamlet is mad ; that his profound intelligence, and his deep, conscious planning, mean nothing, or, to cite the expression of one of them, that "madness is compatible with *some* of the ripest and richest manifestations of intellect ;" whereof Hamlet is an example. Just the thought of old Polonius.

Hear him: "How pregnant, *sometimes*, his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of." Hence we cannot but regard those persons who believe in the madness of Hamlet as in the condition of Polonius in the play—most completely befooled by Hamlet's disguise. If, too, the characters of the play are considered, but little will be found to justify the hypothesis of Hamlet's madness. Besides Polonius, only the two women—the Queen and Ophelia—neither of whom was strong enough to have an independent opinion, take Hamlet to be mad. The King, though a little doubtful at first, soon knows better, and acts upon his conviction to the end; moreover, Horatio, the most intimate friend and chosen vindicator of Hamlet, does not seem to have the remotest notion of the insanity of Hamlet. ✓

Still another theory on this subject is possible, and has been maintained. It is that Hamlet is neither mad nor feigns madness. To most readers, doubtless, such a view contradicts the whole tenor of the play. Hamlet has certainly made the impression of an insane man upon the members of the court generally, except the King; are they, then, the mad people? Also, he has endeavored to produce just that impression; both his intention and its effect can hardly be explained away. It may be said that Hamlet is only acting his own nature in his wild freaks; that this is the permanent element of his character—to play the madman. But this, too, is simulation; besides, if there is one thing emphasized, it is the great change which has come over him—our much-changed son he is called. Certainly his present conduct is so different from what it has been that the whole court are trying to find the cause

of the transformation. But, if it were Hamlet's nature from youth to act as he now acts, it certainly would not be such a matter of surprise and sharp inquiry.

✓ The theories concerning Hamlet's madness may be classed under three heads: First, that his madness is real; second, that it is feigned; third, that it is neither real nor feigned. Even a fourth theory may be distinguished — he does not feign madness, but something else. These shade into each other, forming almost every variety of opinion; indeed, they are sometimes combined, as, for example, in the statement that Hamlet is both mad and is feigning madness. It is hard, assuredly, to draw the line; the sole anchor in this ocean of opinion would seem to be the insight — *Hamlet is never so mad as not to be responsible*.

But the theory of feigned insanity has a very grave difficulty which the other two theories do not have, and which, probably, compelled them into being. What is the motive of the man? What good is to be gained by such a pretense? Nay, does not this simulated madness add new difficulties to his situation? He would seem of himself to have given to the King the very best pretext for putting him out of the way by incarcerating him in a mad-house. Even his great popularity could not help him, for the people would say, a madman can not be allowed to run loose. It has even been brought forward as an argument that the best proof of real insanity is to feign insanity under such circumstances. Hardly any two writers agree about the purpose of this strange simulation, and the Poet here, as on so many other points, gives no decisive clew. So the apple of discord is thrown among the supporters of the doctrine of feigned insanity, after having valiantly defended their cause against its enemies.

It is said that Hamlet's object was to conceal his own thoughts, to assassinate secretly the King, to escape without responsibility, to amuse himself by confounding others — there is no end to the various motives assigned. Some have held that the disguise was not necessary to effect Hamlet's purpose; others have even thought that it was in the way of his success. Hence it was a mistake, his first great mistake, from which all the tragic consequences flowed. But we have already traveled too far in this primeval chaos of conjecture. So much may be finally said: Hamlet's insanity is feigned, his immediate object being to deceive Polonius and the court, in order that he might more surely pursue his greater and more ultimate object — the discovery of the King's guilt.

II. Time has introduced an element of discord; the action seems, to one person, to last ten days; to another, ten years. Neither period can be sustained by precise facts and figures; the essential links are always made of conjectures — usually a very weak material. The Poet, however, wants to avoid the arithmetical, and to excite the imaginative, faculty; accordingly it may be confessed that the action seems long — indeed, a good life-time. *Hamlet* is a grand development, which cannot shoot up in twenty-four hours — (the sufficient limit of many a good French play.) You must appear to live with it — develop with it; it should make Time long instead of short; and, on the other hand, we must not infer that it drags, causing weariness; a great deal of movement is here, and rapid movement — no stagnation. The action is both rapid and long; the two qualities are not inconsistent — as a long and busy life, for instance. The longer it seems the more the reader is likely to be obtaining from it; let him not hurry to the

end of it no more than to the end of his own life. So it will continue, no doubt, to seem short to some, and long to others; two such classes of readers do, indeed, exist for every good book.

The same trouble exists with the age of Hamlet. A youth at the beginning, and thirty years old at the end, of the play—strange inconsistency! Whereat still stranger proposals of compromise—let us add the extremes and divide the sum by two, which gets, say, twenty-four years as the fixed and unchangeable age of Hamlet in the future. “O horrible! O horrible! most horrible!” May the writer say that, for him, instead of having ten or a dozen years of Hamlet’s life-picture from Shakespeare’s hand, he would have been glad to have started with the Danish Prince as a baby, and had his life prolonged to four-score, like the aged Faust. Yes, Hamlet is a growth—must be seized as a growth; but of growth the outer setting is time.

When shall it be comprehended that the real forms of Time and Place are ruthlessly sacrificed by Shakespeare? Time-Probability, Place-Probability—all external probabilities are employed by him to express his thought; to it everything must yield as the supreme object. Why must we still continue to hear that wretched category, Probability, applied to the creative Imagination; to the author of specters, ghosts, fairies, witches; to the creator of ideal worlds, with their own Space and Time?

III. First of all, in importance, is the collision, which constitutes the basis of the action of the entire play, and which is between Hamlet and the King. They form the most wonderful contrast, yet both exhibit sides of the same great thought. Hamlet has morality without action,

the King has action without morality. Hamlet cannot do his deed at the behest of duty, nor can the King undo—that is, repent of—his deed at the command of conscience. Hamlet represents the undone which should be done, the King represents the done which should be undone. Neither reaches the goal which reason so clearly sets before them, and both perish by the inherent contradiction of their lives. Each one seeks the death of the other, and, by the most rigid poetic justice, they die by the retribution of their deeds.

Hamlet has the most powerful motives which can urge the human breast; his struggle is with one who has murdered his father, debauched his mother, and usurped his throne. These facts are not revealed to him of a sudden in all their fullness—it is the course of the poem to unfold them gradually before his mind; but even at the beginning his prophetic soul surmised the whole truth. It is a curious fact of anthropology that sensitive natures often feel that of which they have no information; instinct and presentiment seem to supply the place of knowledge. Hence the melancholy of Hamlet, at the very outset, shows the morbid activity of feeling, though there is a partial motive in the conduct of his mother, which is known to him. But, when the guilt of the King is as clear as day, he does not act. Why? The answer to this question must give the solution of his character.

Let us make, once more, the oft-repeated comparison with the Greek view, for there is an excellent opportunity. In the legend of Orestes, who has been so frequently contrasted with Hamlet, we see the same content—father murdered, mother debauched, throne usurped. But Orestes, true to the tragic instinct of Greece, is one with

his end ; he marches directly to it by the deepest necessity of his nature. He never stops to reflect on the character of his act ; he never for a moment doubts what he is to do ; nothing can possibly interpose itself between him and his deed. To be sure, if that deed was wrong, the dreadful Furies might pursue him with their terrors ; but they were something external to him, with which he had nothing to do. In other words, he never asked, never could ask, himself the question : Is this act right or wrong ? There was his dead father ; his only duty was revenge. He might thereby commit another crime equally great, but this reflection he did not make. Hence he did not possess what is now called a moral consciousness ; nor was it possessed, except in an embryonic state, by the Grecian world, for it is the special product of modern spirit.

Now, if we add this moral element to Orestes, we shall in all essential features have Hamlet. Its leading characteristic is to react against the end proposed — to call it into question, and to test the same by its own criteria. Hamlet is impelled by the strongest incentives to kill the King — such is one side ; but the other side comes up before him with appalling strength — have I the right to kill him ? And here it is important to inquire into the nature of this right which has such authority with Hamlet. It is not law, it is not custom, nor even public opinion — indeed, it would defy all these if it came into conflict with them ; it is, therefore, nothing established and possessing objective validity. Moreover, mankind would justify him if he slew the King. Hence it is *himself*, his own subjectivity, which he sets up as the absolute umpire of his actions. He cannot satisfy *himself* that he should do the

deed, however great the other considerations may be which impel him to it. Here we see the moral consciousness in its extreme expression; it is the assertion of the right of the individual to determine the nature of his act. That the modern world gives validity to this right need not be told to the reader. It is commonly called conscience in the wider, and not strictly religious, use of the word; by it the individual claims the privilege of determining his own action *through himself*, against all demands of objective institutions, as State, Law, or any established authority.

In Hamlet these two sides are in the most fearful contradiction. He acknowledges both principles; he thinks it to be his sacred duty to avenge his father — at the same time he feels the unspeakable iniquity and misery of murder. The difficulty is he cannot subordinate these two principles of action; at one moment the one is uppermost, but the next moment the other is stronger. Such is the terrible struggle which rends his heart asunder and destroys his peace of mind. It should be observed that in his language he dwells more upon his revenge, and he tries to goad himself onward to it, but there is always the moral scruple which stays his hand. The presupposition of the entire play is the moral nature of Hamlet; hence it is not brought into prominence directly, but is always implied as the element which he is trying to overcome; it is the old stock, which he is attempting to inoculate with a new principle.

Nor are his scruples without foundation. He is seeking revenge, which means that he is taking justice into his own hands; and, hence, he commits a new wrong, which, in its turn, begets another — the result of which conduct,

as exhibited in history, is the feud which transmits itself from generation to generation. It is the annihilation of law for the individual to administer the law in his own case. There is, therefore, an institution of society—the court of justice—before which the criminal is to be cited to receive the penalty due to his crimes. But, in the present instance, the criminal happens to be the King himself—the very fountain of justice and authority. His trial would, hence, be a mockery—a contradiction in terms. What remains? Only this: That, if the King is to be punished at all, it must be by the individual—Hamlet. Thus the deed is thrown back upon him, single and alone, with all its consequences and responsibilities. Here we see the internal conflict, which always palsied the arm of Hamlet; it was a fearful struggle, which may well excite our pity and terror—he would not, yet he could; he could not, yet he would.

It is just at this point where we must seek for the tragic element in Hamlet's character. Tragedy is not merely stage-slaughter. In its true significance it exhibits a collision of duties, which duties may have equal validity in the breast of the hero; hence he perishes beneath their strife, because he knows not how to subordinate them. Here also may be noticed an essential distinction between ancient and modern tragedy. In the former the character is the bearer of one end alone—each individual has his single object to accomplish, in the execution of which he lays his whole existence; hence the collision is external, and between the different individuals who have different ends. But modern tragedy, while it has this element, too, possesses in its most complete manifestations an additional principle; it makes the collision internal as well

as external. The same individual has two different and contradictory ends, both of which demand realization; thus there is a double collision — with himself on the one hand, and with the external individual on the other.

Here the Poet might stop, basing his characterization of Hamlet wholly upon this moral element; here some critics very positively state that he does stop. They declare that Hamlet's unwillingness to act proceeds from his doubt concerning the King's guilt; that his conscience alone keeps him from sweeping to the deed. Unquestionably he hates murder from the bottom of his soul—especially murder for an unproved crime. Still, when the crime is proved, and he says and believes that it is proved, he does not act. Something else, therefore, belongs to his character; a higher synthesis of it must be made, not neglecting its moral side. The hesitation of Hamlet springs, not merely from his conscience, but also from his intellect; it lies in his mental, as well as in his moral, composition.

IV. We are now ready for the complete statement of the conflict in Hamlet's mind. It involves in its sweep, not only the moral, but also the entire intellectual, nature of man. Conscience being also a phase of mind, the whole may be summed up in the expression — Subjective Intelligence versus Will. We shall revert for a moment to our former illustration taken from the Greeks. They lacked, not only the moral consciousness above mentioned, but the whole realm of which it is only a part — the absolute mediation of spirit with itself; in other words, subjectivity in its highest form, or, to employ still another expression, the complete thought of Freedom. On the theoretical side this is seen in their doctrine of Fate, which

at last ruled the King of Gods and Men — the mighty Jupiter. An external power thus controls even the Absolute; the highest, after all, has over itself a higher. But it is most plainly observed, in the practical affairs of the Greeks, every important action was determined by omens, by oracles, by prophetic utterances; the greatest generals never gave battle without consulting the sacrifices. This custom, so strange to our ways of thinking, was founded upon an essential limitation of the Grecian spirit. It demanded this external impulse, and no Greek could, as we say, make up his mind — that is, have his mind determine out of its own activity — from its own infinite depths, what was to be done. This element, which will, perhaps, be better understood by the contrast with the Greeks, who did not have it, must be also added to Hamlet, in order to embrace all the elements of his character.

Hence between Hamlet and his deed is interposed what may be called the entire world of subjectivity. It is, moreover, this world in its one-sidedness, without the objectifying element or Will. We have dwelt upon one phase of this principle — moral consciousness; but it has many phases, and, indeed, includes the whole sphere of Intelligence as distinguished from Will. The fact is, therefore, to be emphasized that Hamlet represents the entire range of subjective spirit. This has three leading forms, each of which we shall find in excessive development in Hamlet.

The first and lowest of these forms is the emotional principle of man's nature, which includes the feelings, presentiments, impulses — all of which are important elements in Hamlet's character, and sometimes are found

in morbid activity. It is the dark realm of the Unconscious, in which the guiding light of reason may be dimmed or quite extinguished. So, it will be seen, when Hamlet follows impulse, not only all rational action is destroyed, but he becomes a criminal. The excess of emotion and passion, in which Hamlet is generally portrayed by the Poet, is highly characteristic of a subjective nature, which must always lack that calmness and steadiness which result from a conscious mastery over the objective world.

The second form is what may be termed the phenomenal principle of mind, in which the subject becomes conscious of itself on the one hand, and of an external world of reality on the other. Upon this world of reality the mind now imposes its own subjective forms — applies its own one-sided predicates to all the manifold phases of existence. Thus the whole objective world, from the realm of nature upwards, may be completely transformed by being passed through a peculiar mental medium. Hence this world only appears to be — is phenomenal. Now, Hamlet exhibits many characteristics of such a state of mind. He cannot see the rationality of the world; it is a dire, horrible phantasm, which he would be glad to leave in a hurry.

— " 'Tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely."

Thus he did not look at the moral order of the universe in its true reality, but as transmuted in its passage through his own mind. Indeed, sometimes even his sensations and perceptions of external objects seem to be affected in the same way, as Coleridge has observed. There is an expres-

sion of his own which, though it probably has a different meaning in the connection where it is found, may, nevertheless be applied here—there is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so. The predominance of this phenomenal principle gives to the play its unreal, ghostly element—a side which will be considered more fully in another place, when we come to treat of the Ghost.

✓ The third form of subjective spirit is the psychological, which is the most important of all, in the consideration of Hamlet. In the first sphere—the emotional—mental operations were unconscious and instinctive; in the second—the phenomenal—we see the realm of consciousness begin, and the mind busied with the objective world; but now, in the third, it goes back to itself, and grasps its own doings. The mind turns from the contemplation of external reality, which trait it showed in the last phase—the phenomenal—and looks at itself, feeds upon its own operations. This is the extreme of subjectivity; the intellect is pushed to the very limit of its own negation, and, unless it can make the logical transition to the Will, it must remain forever entangled in its own meshes. Consider its condition. The mind retires in upon itself, and looks at its own operations; this process, however, is a mental process, and, in its turn, must be scanned; this step, too, being like the preceding, demands examination as well as they; the result is, an infinite series in which the mind is hopelessly caught, and in which all action must perish. Such is what we call Reflection—an interminable passing from one subjective notion to another, which, in its fundamental nature, is mere repetition. Here is the point where we must seize the character of Hamlet in its concentration; here we must place the limit beyond

which he cannot finally stir. This finitude, which he cannot overcome, is the ultimate cause of his ruin.

If we examine the above-mentioned principles with care, we think that from them can be deduced all the peculiarities of Hamlet's character, and its seeming contradictions can be understood. We can thus account for the tendency of his mind to play with itself—to seek out hidden relations in every direction. We can thus comprehend how he is so perfectly conscious of all his states, and even of his weaknesses; for Hamlet knows what is the matter with himself, and declares it in the bitterest language of self-denunciation. His fondness for quibbling, which seeks the hidden relations of words, is one phase of this same element; his tendency to spin out a notion into all its relations is another—the one finding its material in language, the other in thought. His intellectual keenness in deceiving, in feigning madness, in discovering the plans of his enemies, in reading the thoughts and intentions of others who were sent to pump him or ensnare him, and in many other similar cases, shows him the master of every form of subjective intelligence. He could cast himself into these infinite Protean shapes—could even carry them out as individual acts, but the ultimate purpose of them all was a fruit which he could never reach. Finally, the moral consciousness before spoken of must be referred to this head; for it is only the subjective element claiming the right to determine the deed, demanding that therein it be satisfied, and, in the case of Hamlet, refusing to be satisfied.

Moreover, the vicious elements of Hamlet's character spring from the same source. Hence his procrastination; for his mind cannot free itself from the net of its own

working so as to translate itself into objectivity. He resolves on the death of the King, even with passion; he places his end before himself, even with violence; but that end is subjective, and, hence, exposed to the endless twistings and curvetings of Reflection, and at last is buried beneath the confusion. His sporting with possibilities also finds its basis here; for the mind is the world of possibilities; they only exist in it, and are hardly to be found in the world of actuality. Here, then, is a glorious field for the exercise of his peculiar faculty; what may be is ever before his mind, and has quite as much validity as what is—nay, sometimes more. Again, how perfect are the excuses which he can frame for not acting, as in the case when he refuses to strike the fatal blow while the King is at prayer, lest the latter might go to heaven! Nobody knew better than Hamlet the absurdity of such a proposition, yet it is good enough for a pretext. But all these psychological peculiarities, of which the play is full, need not be stated, for they have the same logical basis.

Such is the most general form of the internal collision in Hamlet. He is the grand representative of the entire realm of subjectivity, and he exhibits its finitude and its negation in his own fate; for subjective spirit—mere intelligence without activity—cannot save man. Man must be able, not merely to understand the world, but to create it anew in a certain degree; not merely to translate it into the forms of his own mind, but to impose his own forms upon it—to make it the bearer of his own ends. Thus only can he assert his universality. Hamlet knows of action in its highest sense, since he is master of the world of thought, yet he cannot attain to it, though perpetually

striving. He is intellectual, and but little more. He cannot realize his plan; he cannot make himself valid in the objective world but to a small degree, and, in so far as he falls short of this, he can hardly be called an actual being, since he—his mind, his thought—has no existence in the world of reality. How, then, can he continue to live? It must be found in the end that he has not strength of individuality sufficient to maintain life. He complains of the external world, which is always intruding upon his privacy and disturbing his quiet intercourse with himself; he even meditates to end this “sea of troubles” by ending his own existence. It is a troublesome world, indeed, which, if it be not controlled, must itself necessarily control. ✓

V. But it is not the purpose herein to maintain that Hamlet is excluded from every species of action. On the contrary, there is only one kind of action from which he is wholly excluded, though a tendency to procrastination is not infrequently apparent. Just here occurs, perhaps, the greatest difficulty in comprehending Hamlet’s character. He is wonderfully ready to do certain things; other things he will not do, and cannot bring himself to do—in fine, he acts, and does not act. Hence different critics have given exactly opposite opinions of him; one class say he possesses no power of action; another class declare that he possesses a vast energy of Will. How can this contradiction be reconciled? Only by distinguishing the different kinds of action of which men are capable. Undoubtedly Hamlet can do some things, but the great deed he cannot reach. We shall attempt a classification of the different forms of action, and point out what lies in the power of Hamlet. ✓

1. Impulse has sway over Hamlet at times, as over every human being. This is the first and lowest form of action—unconscious, unreflecting—and belongs to the emotional nature of man, in which, as we have before seen, Hamlet is not wanting. Under its influence people act upon the spur of the moment, without thinking of consequences. Hence Hamlet's drawback—reflection—is not now present, and there is nothing to restrain him from action. But the instant there is delay sufficient to let his thoughts get a start, then farewell deed; impulse possesses him no longer. This is most strikingly shown when he sees the King at prayer; his first impulse is to slay him, but a reflection steps between, and the accomplishment of his plan is again deferred. Moreover, impulse may lead to immoral action, even to crime, since it acts regardless of content; it cannot inquire of itself, What is the nature of this deed which I am doing? but blindly carries itself into execution. Hamlet, therefore, as a sentient being, is capable of this kind of action; and here is where he must seek the source of all his positive acts. He slays Polonius under the influence of a momentary impulse, and finally, even in the catastrophe, it requires the goading of a sudden passion to bring him to kill the King.

2. Hamlet possesses what may be called negative action—the power of frustrating the designs of his enemies. He exhibits an infinite acuteness in seeing through their plans; in fact, this seems an exercise of intellectual subtlety, in which he takes special delight; he also possesses the practical strength to render futile all the attempts of the King against his person. He is prepared for everything; his confidence in himself, in this direction,

is unlimited; he knows that he can "delve one yard below their mines and blow them at the moon." But here his power of action ends; it has only this negative result—the defeat of the schemes against him. It is undeniable that this requires speedy resolution and quick execution, and, hence, may appear contradictory to what has been before stated; still, it is not inconsistent with the character of Hamlet. For this sort of action, though it is no doubt a deed, ends with negating some other deed, and not with any truly positive act. Moreover, it is a condition of the drama itself that Hamlet possesses so much action, at least, as to maintain himself for a while; otherwise, he must fall a victim to the first conspiracy, and the play abruptly terminate. It is only the great substantial deed, which includes all other deeds in its end, that Hamlet cannot perform. This brings us to the next kind of action.

3. It is what we term Rational Action from which Hamlet is excluded. Here the individual seizes a true and justifiable end, and carries it into execution. This end Intelligence knows as rational, for it alone can recognize the worth and validity of an end, and the Will brings it to realization. Thus we have the highest union of Intelligence and Will, which gives the most exalted form of action. This unity Hamlet cannot reach; he grasps the end, and comprehends it in its fullest significance; but there it remains, caught in its own toils. But what would true action demand? There may be doubts and difficulties in the way, but these are ultimately brushed aside; there may even be moral scruples which rear their front—and this is actually the case with Hamlet—but these, too, must finally be subordinated—the higher to the lower. Thus the rational man acts; having seized the highest end,

he casts aside all doubts, reflections, also moral misgivings; for the true morality must be contained in his end, if it be really the highest.

Now, what is this end? Hamlet is invoked to vindicate both the Family and State, together with his own individual rights; it is his father, the King, who is slain; his mother, the Queen, who is debauched; himself who is deprived of a throne. The order of the world is thus turned upside down; he knows that he is born to set it right; that this is the highest duty, to which every inferior duty must yield; he repeatedly makes his resolution in the strongest terms, yet, after all, he allows his purpose to be first clouded and then defeated by his moral feelings and interminable reflections. The objective world of Spirit—State, Family, Society, Right—which Hamlet, by station and culture, is called upon to maintain as the highest end which man can place before himself—since upon them depend his very existence as a rational being—is lost in the inextricable mazes of subjectivity.

By this distinction it would seem that the striking contradiction in the character of Hamlet—his action and his non-action—can be reconciled. We are to consider what he can perform and what he cannot. Certain kinds of action lie in his power, but the one great act is beyond his ability. In like manner the difference of opinion among critics upon this subject would meet with a satisfactory solution.

Moreover, this distinction will assist us in dispelling a confusion which very often haunts the reader of this drama. When it is said that Hamlet's reflection destroys his action, is it meant that we should never think before we act? Many have taken such to be the Poet's meaning, and have even accepted the doctrine that we must go

back to impulse, and cut loose from our intellect; in other words, they declare that instinctive is higher and truer than conscious activity. They do this because they think that nothing remains but to take the lower form of action — impulse. But we have seen above that there is another more exalted kind — Rational Action — which demands thought, for its content can be seized only by thought, and, indeed, that content itself is thought in its objective form. Thus Intelligence passes over into reality — becomes a principle of action. Man now grasps a substantial end by mind, and then carries it into execution. That the Poet does not regard impulse as the true basis of action is shown by the fact that he gives it to Hamlet, who, by this very means, is first made a criminal, and then brought to destruction. Hence the lesson is that we are to reflect before acting, but not to stop there.

Rational Action is the great object, and that always includes Intelligence. Having grasped a true end (of course, through Intelligence), we should proceed to realize it without thinking on all possible relations and consequences; for subjective reflection looks at the deed, and summons up every imaginable possibility. As these are simply infinite the action is infinitely deferred. Consider, for a moment, what *may* take place, if you merely go to your daily occupation — a team may run over you, a house may fall on you, a stray bullet may hit you — and it will be evident what possibilities lie in the most ordinary act, what excuses a lively fancy can rouse up to shirk the performance of any duty. Hamlet clearly recognizes this rational end, yet will not translate it into reality, because of “thinking too precisely on the event,” to use his own expression.

VI. The death of Polonius has given great difficulty,

and even offense ; its object should be fully comprehended, for it not only illustrates the character of Hamlet, but also is one of the leading motives of the play. No other incident shows so deep a design, or is so appropriate for its purpose. Hamlet, acting blindly through impulse, slays the wrong one ; the result is — guilt. This warning, therefore, speaks from the rash act: Let no rational being give up control to impulse which cannot see, cannot distinguish, the nature of a deed. Man must, therefore, reflect before proceeding to action. But, through reflection, Hamlet is unable to slay the right one ; thus he cannot perform the great injunction laid upon his soul. Such is his dilemma ; if he acts, it is through impulse, and he falls into guilt ; if he reflects, he cannot act — that is, he cannot do the Great Deed of his life, and so commits, at least, a sin of omission. What will be Hamlet's solution ? He tells it himself in the latter part of the play. Throw yourself back into impulse, and abandon control through Intelligence. But what will be the result of such a doctrine ? Death — the thinking being who cannot act from thought must perish.

Through the death of Polonius, Hamlet has committed the very crime which he was seeking to punish ; the son of a father murdered has himself murdered a father. Retribution will call up against him a son, at whose hands he will meet his fate. So this incident offers the profoundest illustration of Hamlet's character, and, at the same time, furnishes the motive of his death. Polonius deserved to die for his offenses, but Hamlet had no right to slay him.

With this somewhat lengthy introduction, in which it is attempted to give the elements of Hamlet's character in their logical relation, we may now turn to the drama itself, and watch its development under the hands of the Poet. The plan is quite simple ; it is to bring a series of exter-

nal influences to bear upon Hamlet, which first supply him with the most powerful motives, and then spur him on to action. Given a character of deep moral feeling and decided intellectual culture, and we have the chief pre-supposition of the play. Hamlet is introduced as a man about thirty years of age, who has spent a number of years at the University of Wittenberg. It is to be observed that this is a German university, and, moreover, the home of the Reformation—hints which the Poet has given not without a profound purpose. For it is here indicated that the culture of Hamlet is German, in contrast to the French culture of Laertes, and, hence, lays stress upon the internal and spiritual nature of man rather than the outward show and conventionalities of life. Also, the German mind is now, and always has been, speculative rather than practical, and, hence, to-day it is the teacher of the world in thought and philosophy. In Germany, too, began that rebellion against the externality of the Catholic Church in favor of subjective freedom, which rebellion was nourished in this very Wittenberg. So, by a happy stroke, the Poet has identified Hamlet with the great historical movement of modern times, which sought to free the human mind from the domination of outward forms, and to bring it to a profounder self-consciousness. Hamlet, therefore, is true to his education in the highest degree.

SECTION II.—GENERAL STATEMENTS.

The ethical element in which the drama moves is the Family, of which there has been a double violation—against both father and mother. Thus the son rises up for revenge, which, however, demands the murder of the uncle

— a deed which the son refuses to perform, through moral scruples and intellectual hesitation. But, acting through impulse, he slays a father, and thus becomes guilty of the very crime against the Family which he is seeking to punish. Thus he calls up against himself another son, who applies to him the logic of his own deed. Also, the State is always standing in the background as a minor factor of the collision. Hamlet's father was King, and Hamlet believed himself to have been wrongfully deprived of the throne. Some maintain that Claudius was not a usurper, as Denmark was an elective monarchy; such could hardly have been Hamlet's view of the succession, and probably it was not the Poet's. The political violation is repeatedly dwelt upon, though it is by no means so strongly emphasized as the domestic violation. Thus Family and State are both present; but these ethical elements become almost latent in the overwhelming prominence given to the psychological elements.

Let us now grasp fully the organization of the play. There are two main movements, of which the first portrays the conflict between Hamlet and the King; each is seeking to find out the plans of his opponent, and, when they are found out, to destroy him. At the same time each has an internal conflict with himself — Hamlet with his intellect, mainly; the King with his conscience. Both are foiled doubly. In the external conflict neither gets rid of the other — Hamlet does not slay the King, nor does the King succeed in sending Hamlet to England; in the internal conflict neither can heal the breach of his own soul — Hamlet will not act, the King will not repent. The first movement, in general, shows guilt — the King has murdered the old Hamlet, and the young Hamlet has murdered

Polonius. The second movement portrays the final retribution, along with the great changes in the minds and in the circumstances of the various persons. Ophelia goes mad; Hamlet, not acting, comes to believe in fate, and surrenders himself to the guidance of external accident; the King, not repenting, is hardened by transgression, and plunges readily into a new crime. Still, the external conflict between Hamlet and the King continues after Hamlet's return from his short voyage; the King has now, as his chief instrument, Laertes, who, righteously undertaking to avenge the murder of a father, suffers himself to be perverted into the instrument of the murderer of a father. All these perish by the logic of their deeds, together with the Queen, who, sharing in her husband's perverse life, shares in his death.

The present division into Acts is inept, and does not proceed from Shakespeare. The Third Act should end with Scene Fourth, Act Fourth; thus the first movement would occupy just three acts, and the second movement just two acts. It will also be seen that there are two threads running through the whole play—that of Hamlet and that of the King; between whom the conflict takes place. A short abstract of each thread in each movement may also be given, in order to aid in grasping the whole play.

The first thread of the first movement is that of Hamlet, and it has two phases, the external and the internal. On the one hand, it exhibits the influences which come upon him from without to drive him to the great deed of his life; on the other hand, it exhibits the counteraction of these influences through Hamlet's moral and intellectual hesitation. Thus the blood is taken out of all external

forces, and the deed becomes a ghost ; transmuted through his peculiar mental medium, the objective world turns to an unreality. Still, he believes that intelligence can control human action, and hopes for this result in his own case. His sole instrument is his friend, Horatio ; but there must also be grouped around him those influences which work upon him externally — as the ghost, together with the soldiers who see it, the players, Fortinbras and his captain, the grave-diggers. These are the groups of the Hamlet thread.

The second thread of the first movement is that of the King surrounded by his instruments. He, too, has a double conflict—an external one with Hamlet, and an internal one with himself. His first object is to discover Hamlet's secret, and then to get rid of him when found to be dangerous. His instruments may be classed in three groups. The first is for the general purposes of State, and have little or nothing to do with Hamlet, as Voltimand and Cornelius ; the second is composed of courtiers — the servile tools of the monarch—as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to whom Osrick may be added ; the third is the family of Polonius — father, son, and daughter — most intimately bound up in the destiny of the House of Denmark — all of whom are used as instruments by the King against Hamlet, and are ground to death in the conflict. The King, therefore, sets influences to work, while Hamlet lets influences come upon him ; Hamlet possesses action to the extent of nullifying these influences, but he cannot do the great postive deed.

The first thread of the second movement continues the development of Hamlet. He had been sent off to England to be murdered, when, by accident, he is once more brought

back to Denmark. The conflict with the King is opened anew, but under wholly different circumstances. Hamlet no longer has faith in intelligence as the controlling power in the world; it is chance; it is destiny. Thus he throws himself into the arms of fate; previously he believed in action, though not acting; now he does not even believe in action. The man who would not do the deed has come to deny the very possibility of the deed—as the product of rational foresight. This psychological change is the most important feature of Hamlet's characterization, and constitutes the essential difference between the first and second movement. But, when he thinks for a moment of proceeding to action, there stands Laertes opposed to him—the real embodiment of his own destiny—for Laertes must slay him if he slay the King; both have the same ground of revenge. At this apparition his arm falls palsied by his side, and he quietly lets himself be caught in a plot which he knew of, or strongly suspected.

The second thread of the second movement is that of the King, whose chief instrument against Hamlet is now Laertes. The death of the parent, Polonius, furnishes a justifiable motive to the son, which is further intensified by the condition of his sister, Ophelia, whose madness and death are here given. But Laertes ruins his cause by allowing himself to be made an instrument of the diabolical plans of the King—that King who is himself the murderer of a father, and who is now seeking to destroy the son. Thus Laertes is whirled into the tragic circle of retribution, and becomes the author of his own fate. He aids the destroyer of the parent to destroy the avenger of the parent, which avenger is, logically, himself. He thus

assails his own principle, and, as it were, passes the sentence of death upon himself.

The method of the following development will be a little different from the usual manner. The two threads — that of Hamlet and that of the King — will be carried separately through the two movements; thus a survey of the total development of each side is given without interruption. But the reader has the means of following the action by movements, instead of threads, if he so chooses, as all these divisions of the play are carefully designated at the proper places.

SECTION III. — THE HAMLET THREAD.

The essential elements of the present drama and of Hamlet's character have now been unfolded. Upon this character a series of external circumstances are brought to bear, the object of which is to incite him to action. The course of the play is, therefore, to exhibit these circumstances and their influence upon Hamlet, and, consequently, we have now to take the poem in hand and to watch its gradual development. We shall consider the different influences separately, and try to point out their order and gradation. Possibly, too, there may be often found between them a logical connection.

I. The first of these external influences which are brought to bear upon Hamlet is the conduct of his mother. Her marriage, especially with such a man as Claudius, so soon after her husband's death, has touched to the very core the profound ethical nature of Hamlet, who feels that therein the family relation is essentially annihilated. He has to deny to his own mother all true womanhood, and,

hence, the moral world seems to him to be falling into chaos. As Hamlet's whole being is wrapped up in this moral world, he feels that he possesses no bond which can tie him to existence; hence he is continually contemplating suicide, from which, however, that same ethical nature holds him back. Besides, he has, as before stated, a foreboding of something still worse, which is soon to be revealed.

The second of these external influences which come upon Hamlet is the Ghost, for which preparation is made in the very first scene of the play. It tells the terrible tale of his father's murder, and enjoins the still more terrible revenge. The motives for action are now complete; presentiment has become knowledge. But just here arises a question which is probably destined to be a matter of doubt, and, hence, a subject of discussion, as long as the play is read by human eyes. What is the significance of the Ghost? The easiest way of getting rid of the difficulty is, no doubt, to take the apparition just as it is, without further troubling ourselves about the matter. But, as one cannot well suppose that Shakespeare believed in ghosts, every thinking man must demand some explanation. It may be held that it is employed as a species of poetical machinery, somewhat as Virgil used the Grecian Mythology. Still, this will not do. Nearly all close readers of Shakespeare have the firmest faith that he never introduces supernatural forms without a profound spiritual signification. Another theory is that the Ghost was gotten up by somebody — say Horatio, or the soldiers, or persons not mentioned in the play; and there are several passages which, being read with such an opinion in view, are sufficient to excite an impression to this effect. Again, it is

supposed by some that the Ghost is a typical representation of Hamlet's suspicion, or, possibly, that of the people—an objectification of the vague and ghost-like doubts, hints, rumors of the time. Besides special objections against each of these views, there lies the general objection against all of them—there is no adequate ground stated for the employment of the Ghost. The Poet has himself given us no solution of the difficulty, when a mere hint would have been sufficient. We may suppose, therefore, that he intended to leave his audience in the dark about the matter; that he designed to have them see just what Hamlet sees, and no more. He simply represents the Ghost as one of those external influences which are to spur Hamlet on to action. This is its function in the play, but the secret of its origin must remain forever untold.

Our consideration of this subject, therefore, will take a somewhat different turn. We shall not neglect to ascertain the meaning of the Ghost, as was attempted in the above-mentioned theories, but, at the same time, we shall accept it in its present form, and undertake to place the employment of it upon a rational basis. Here is a great mediation in an unusual way; what justification for its use? The simple question then is, why is the Ghost taken? Its reality must be carefully observed; it speaks the truth; it tells what is nowhere else told in the drama; it gives the pathos to Hamlet, and furnishes the basis of his action; it acts quite the same, in this respect, as if it were no ghost. There is no hint that it has falsified, and, in fact, the entire course and purport of the drama rest upon its statements in reference to the murder of the King and faithlessness of his wife.

We think that the character of Hamlet determines the

fact that this news takes the form of a ghost. It has already been stated how he melts all reality into his own subjective shapes; how he conjures up all sorts of relations, doubts, possibilities, excuses—which may be called the ghosts of Reflection. Now, Hamlet lived in this unreal, subjective world, where true existence turns to a shadow. The Ghost here means just this—an unreal form of a reality. It is the way in which a fact reveals itself to such a mind—a fact whose actual nature is entirely changed and colored by the mental medium through which it passes, and its real character is transformed into the unreal, ghostly.

This apparition is the leading motive of the play. It furnishes Hamlet the basis of his action—gives him his end, which is to slay the King. But the murder of his father was a deed; here he enters the realm of shadows; for how does the deed appear to a deedless man? No doubt as a ghost. How, then, can it work as a spur to him? Because Hamlet, as an intellectual man, knows of action, and its necessity; hence his longing for it—his seeking for it like something lost, which, however, he cannot find. He cannot *realize* this knowledge, hence it can be to him only an unreality—a specter. The question with the Poet is, what objective form can I get to represent Hamlet's view of such a deed? The Ghost is most happily chosen, for it means that the form is not a substantial one—has no objective validity; it may be comprehended, but not realized.

There are, therefore, two elements in the Ghost, both of which must be kept distinctly before the mind—the real and the unreal. On the one hand, it represents occurrences which actually took place; its utterances are true, and are taken throughout the play just as if they had been

spoken by an ordinary character. Hamlet, to be sure, hesitates in one place to accept its statements, but that is only an excuse for deferring action. On the other hand, its form is unreal as being a ghost—which form results, as before explained, from the nature of Hamlet's mind.

But how does the opinion here presented consist with the fact that others see the Ghost besides Hamlet? It is specially to be noted with what care the Poet guards the objectivity of the Ghost as one of its essential elements; for it is not only seen by others, but it is seen by others before it is seen by Hamlet himself. Not the least hint is given of its secret in the whole play, and its objective nature is most rigorously preserved. So great and so striking is the precaution of the Poet, in this respect, that we cannot help attributing it to the most careful design. But what ground is there for such a procedure? A most excellent ground, and one that exhibits the profoundest conception of Tragic Art. *The Poet wishes to involve his audience in the same doubts and conflicts as his hero.* He designs the apparition for us, too; we are to look upon it, as it were, with Hamlet's eyes, and, hence, must not know anything more about it than Hamlet himself. To be sure, we may not regard it with his trust; we may disbelieve entirely in ghosts; but thus the nature of his mind is revealed, and the chasm between his consciousness and our own is made manifest. Still further, the audience must have the same problem before them as Hamlet; they must be assailed by the same difficulty—must be required to solve the enigma of the Ghost. Thus a character becomes tragic to the spectators when they are rent by the same contradiction which destroys the hero. If the audience stands above the hero, and comprehends all his

complications and mistakes, we begin to enter the realm of Comedy.

Suppose the subject were treated otherwise. The Poet might have dispensed with the Ghost, and had the news of the murder told to Hamlet, in a separate scene, by some spy who had secreted himself in the garden; but then we would lose the objective form, which exhibits Hamlet's mind, though he might still be portrayed as vacillating. Again, the Poet might have let the spectators into the mystery of the Ghost, while he kept it a secret to Hamlet; then the whole pathos of the character would be destroyed, for this depends upon the audience sharing in the same struggle as the hero. Such are the grounds upon which rests the justification of the Poet in giving strong objective validity to the Ghost; for these reasons so many people in the play see it besides Hamlet; his mental characteristics are thus shown as they could be by no other means; finally, in this way the tragic element is brought out in its fullest significance, since the audience must solve the same problem, and is involved in the same difficulties as Hamlet.

The third external influence is the company of actors. The connection of this part, with the preceding, is by no means remote. For the drama which they act is also not the reality, but only the representation of the reality. The Ghost is the dim, uncertain subjective representation of the deed — the primitive conception; the drama is the clear objective representation of the deed in an ideal form, yet is not the real action itself. Now, the whole course of the play is to show the influences which spur Hamlet on to do the deed first enjoined by the Ghost, namely, to revenge his father's murder. Revenge means like for like; Hamlet

is to do to the King what the King did to his father. But he will first represent it on the stage, and then, he thinks, act it himself. Hence this play within the play is an intermediate link between the Ghost and the ultimate deed. It is also very characteristic of Hamlet that he is fond of the Drama; it pictures action, but requires none from him. So in his mind he loves to contemplate action, but hates to act.

His changed demeanor has already excited the suspicion of the court, and all the characters of the play who are employed as instruments of the King—Polonius, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Ophelia—are set to work in order to worm out his secret. How they are baffled at every point need not here be detailed, though it forms by itself a most interesting study. In the meantime the players arrive; Hamlet calls for a favorite speech, entitled “The Slaughter of Priam.” But why is this lengthy, and apparently irrelevant, declamation brought in here? Its point lies in the inconsolable grief of Hecuba, wife of Priam, who has just beheld the murder of her husband. Hence Hamlet calls for it as furnishing a soothing contrast to the conduct of his faithless mother. Thus it is seen that this long insertion is in the deepest harmony with the subject of the tragedy, and bears, as a motive, directly upon Hamlet. But that which sets him on fire is the action of the player, who seems to be more influenced by a mere fiction than he himself by the most fearful actual occurrence. Bitter self-reproach follows, with apparently a new resolution. But a doubt rises; a reflection enters—the Ghost *may* be a deception; hence there is another deferment till he can catch the conscience of the King in a play. Nor can he do otherwise; for what is the

deed to Hamlet but a shadowy specter? Hence he doubts the deed which has been done, and doubts the deed which he is to do.

But the matter cannot rest here. The keen reflective Hamlet must know his own state. Already he has shown misgivings in respect to his ability to accomplish his work. Hence, when we next meet him, it is in the far-famed soliloquy on suicide — he is perfectly aware of his mental condition, and seems to regard it as final, as something which cannot be helped. We have already pointed out the motive for self-murder which was frequently hovering before his mind. The subject again comes up in this connection, as he has now become conscious of his resolution, and is still pressed on by the most fearful injunctions. What is he to do? Kill himself—let us first cast up the credit and the debit side of death. Death relieves us from all the natural shocks that flesh is heir to, from all wrongs—in general, from the whips and scorns of time; so much is clear gain. But hold! there is a dream-world beyond; there's the rub:

“For, in that sleep of death, what dreams *may* come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.”

Upon this bare possibility we shall forego all the acknowledged advantages of death. Hamlet has already declared that the external world was too strong for his frail individuality; he cannot resist the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, but is prone to passively suffer all which collides with him. He sees that death is the only destiny of such a person. But what deters him from the act of suicide? The future state, which, whatever else may be

said about it, is the land of shadows, of unrealities to the living man, for the simple reason that he has not yet realized that state, and cannot do so till after death. This realm, being so perfectly void, is a fine field for the imagination, since there is absolutely nothing in the way. Let no one think that by these remarks we are doubting or denying the great doctrine of immortality; but this rests upon quite other grounds, namely, the rationality of man, and cannot be given by imagination. Hamlet, true to his character, assigns the greater validity to this specter of unreality. Whatever the future state may be to others, to him it is, and can only be, the land of possibilities. But the principal thing to be observed is that he is now aware of his own condition, and gives it expression:

"And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with pale cast of thought."

Moreover, his moral nature also rebels at the thought of suicide, as it did at the thought of murder:

"Thus conscience does make cowards of us all."

But the word "conscience" may have here a much broader signification than its present usage allows. The struggle of Hamlet against the King has thus become internal — against himself. The destruction of Claudius was enjoined upon him as the most sacred duty, yet he cannot bring himself to its performance, and is now conscious of the fact. What does he think of himself? "If I have not strength of individuality enough to do such a duty, then I have not strength enough to live; I am too weak to assert myself in this world of rude, buffeting tempests." Such is his conclusion. But he can no more kill himself

than he can kill the King, and for the same reason. It would be a contradiction if he could. Hence we see the same unreality, the same spectral excuses, coming up to forestall action in the latter case as in the former. So Hamlet remains still a living being, with the same conflicts as before, which are now renewed with increased fury.

The play within the play succeeds perfectly, but has also had another result not so favorable to Hamlet. If the latter has now perfect evidence, the King also has become aware of the fact that Hamlet is apprised of his guilt. Consequently, more decisive measures must be taken to get rid of the dangerous dissembler. Preparations are accordingly made to dispatch him to England and there murder him. But this play has struck another chord in the King's character, which, on one or two occasions, hitherto has shown some signs of life — conscience. The attempt at prayer, by the King, forms the counterpart to Hamlet's soliloquy on suicide. The King here has done the deed; his desire is that it should be undone. Note the steps; for we have in this passage the most complete exposition, on the noblest Christian doctrine, and it is worth more than many volumes of Theology. He attempts prayer, which means he tries to place himself in harmony with the Divine Being — the rational principle of the Universe. But that Being he has offended, to the last degree, by his conduct, hence there seems to be no reconciliation. But is there no hope? Yes, there is mercy for even the greatest criminal. How? First, by a complete repentance in spirit for the act; second, by surrendering all its advantages — that is, *you must make that undone which you have done, as far as lies in your power*. You cannot restore the dead, it is true, nor call back the past, but can

do justice to the living by ample restitution. The Spirit of man has this power: It can heal its own wounds; the Will can withdraw itself from its deed and say, "it is no longer mine." Such is subjective repentance. But this is not enough. There must be an objective correspondence, else it is not complete; the deed must be reversed; all gains and advantages must be unconditionally surrendered. Hence the King feels that he cannot be forgiven as long as he is still possessed

"Of those effects for which I did the murder—
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen."

Verily, there is no way out but to make a clean breast of the matter, as we say with true metaphor; and, furthermore, he cannot buy off his own conscience—"there is no shuffling." What remains? Only the bitter demands of repentance. This he tries, and, moreover, essays formal prayer, but without success; he cannot repent. His crimes are too monstrous for him to retrace his steps. Can he give up his queen, his throne, confess the murder of his brother, renounce his plans against young Hamlet? It were to demand too much of poor human nature to expect it—yet such is the only way of salvation. Here we see the contrast between the two: Conscience keeping back Hamlet, yet spurring on the King; the one seeks to do, the other to undo, with the same inefficiency. In the one case, the deed smothers conscience; in the other, conscience the deed. Their actions pertain to the same matter—the murder of the father, the marriage of the mother, the exclusion of the son from the throne. Hamlet is invoked to visit justice upon the man who has done these things; the King is urged by con-

science to make them undone. The King refuses; so does Hamlet.

Perhaps there is no passage in Shakespeare equal to this one in grandeur of thought and in clearness and exhaustiveness of statement. The heart is kindled, and the mind is excited to the highest intensity, by its inmarvelous power. It may be called the Northern or Teutonic interpretation of Christianity, in distinction from the Southern or Romanic. That interpretation insists upon the moral content of religion, as distinguished from its external ceremonies and abstract dogmas. These are considered of no validity unless they make men good — determine their conduct. That a person can be a Christian and immoral at the same time is almost inconceivable to the Northern mind. But if we turn to Calderon, the greatest dramatist of Southern Europe, we shall find quite the opposite interpretation. In his drama called *Purgatorio di San Patricio* there is a direct contrast between these principles. Two characters are portrayed — one of which is good and upright, the other is the most desperate villain that can be imagined, having been guilty of adultery, murder, seduction of nuns — in fact, of quite every conceivable crime. Still, he has Faith, and is ready to lose his life in its defense, and, as a consequence, Heaven has vouchsafed to him many marks of special favor. Both these characters, though morally direct opposites, are still Christians:

“Pues aunque somos Christianos
Los dos, somos tan opuestos
Que distamos quanto va
Desde ser malo á ser bueno.”

Here the antithesis is openly stated — it is not necessary

to be moral in order to be a good Christian ; Christianity and morality are divorced totally. In another drama, *El Príncipe constante*, there is portrayed the collision between Christianity and Mohammedanism. These two forms of faith are not made the basis of a distinction in character ; on the contrary, the Moorish prince possesses all the qualities which command honor and respect in an equal, or even greater, degree than the Spanish prince. Now, it may be fairly stated that this would be no collision at all in Shakespearian art, or for the Northern consciousness. A Spanish audience would, no doubt, applaud the devotion to an abstract dogma, which is represented in this play. But an English or German audience would say : “ If Christianity cannot make better men than Mohammedanism, it has no advantage ; we would just as lieve be of one as the other.” Herein lies the immense difference between Calderon and Shakespeare. The latter brings all religion back to its spiritual basis, and never rests in mere externality. How does it affect the character and conduct of men when they seize these religions as ends in life, and realize them in their actions ? asks Shakespeare. His treatment of this theme can be best seen in the *Merchant of Venice*, in the characters of Shylock and Antonio, where there is also portrayed a religious collision — that between Judaism and Christianity. But Calderon’s main question is, “ Infidel or Christian ? ” or, perhaps, it is more narrow still — “ Catholic or non-Catholic ? ” If a man only believes in the true doctrine, he possesses the privilege of moral delinquency ; for he has the absolute end of man — faith in a dogma. Morality is quite a subordinate, even indifferent, matter. But Shakespeare reverses these elements — religion is subordinate to moral-

ity, or, rather, has morality for its content. In the hands of Calderon the act of formal prayer on the part of the guilty King would have been an ample repentance; but Shakespeare demands something profounder than a mere genuflection.

The fourth external influence is Fortinbras marching against the Polack. The connection between this occurrence and what has just preceded is to be carefully noted. The player exhibited the ideal world of action before Hamlet, but the representation was unable to incite him forward to the deed. There still remains the real world of action, which now appears in the person of young Fortinbras. What influence will this produce upon him? for it would seem to be the climax of incitement. Fortinbras is the man of action, and this element is brought into greater prominence by the small value of its object. The prize is a little patch of ground, not worth a rental of five ducats, yet here is a youth who defies fortune to the utmost for its possession. The contrast strikes Hamlet in the most forcible manner. He has a father murdered, a mother debauched, a throne despoiled — and still he does not act. He resolves anew to perform the deed, but, as the sequel shows, with the same result as before. Here again he states his difficulty with all the energy of self-reproach; it is thinking too precisely on the event, while Fortinbras makes mouths at the invisible event. He confesses that he has strength and means to carry out his end; he can give no good reason to himself for his delay, but is inclined to ascribe it to cowardice—to his anxiety about consequences. It is the strongest example that could be presented to him, and we may suppose that, from the impression which it made upon him, he afterwards

selects Fortinbras as the fittest successor to the throne. For we can well imagine that Hamlet now has the highest appreciation of a man of action.

The introduction of Fortinbras has been condemned by Goethe as an unnecessary part of the drama, but its presence can be justified on the strictest logical grounds. Fortinbras is the man of action, but something more—he is the man of action as the head of the State. He is inspired, in the highest degree, with the sense of nationality. The elder Hamlet had contracted the bounds of his country, which it is the first great object of his ambition to win back, but he is overborne by higher authority. There remains the expedition against the Polack to vindicate some ancient right, or avenge some wrong, from which he returns victorious just at the death of Hamlet. Thus he is seen on all sides asserting his own nationality against external countries which in any way collide with the same; he seeks the full recognition of his people abroad, and is quite ready to subjugate other lands to the strong national spirit which he has aroused. Such a man is a ruler, at least in the most essential sense; he obtains absolute respect for his country without, and strengthens the national spirit within. Herein he stands in direct contrast to Hamlet and the King. They employ their time at home in plotting each other's murder, yet both are afraid to perform the act. The House of Denmark, therefore, goes down in its effete representatives, and the true ruler takes their place.

Thus the play has a positive solution. Most tragedies end with the death of the colliding characters—a merely negative result—which would be the case here were the part of Fortinbras left out. The Danish princes perish

because they are unworthy of their dignity, and are succeeded by one who has shown himself to be a sovereign in the highest sense. The play, therefore, begins with Fortinbras (at the second scene), and ends with Fortinbras; his activity is the frame in which its whole movement is set. Thus the Poet has portrayed him as the absolute contrast to Hamlet, and made him triumphant, at the close, as the man of action. How much, therefore, must the thought of the poem lose by the absence of this character? When we consider also the additional reason for its introduction — that it forms the culmination of that series of external influences which it is the plan of the drama to unfold — the objection of Goethe would seem to be entirely groundless. For Hamlet must have also the real world of action come up before him to incite him to the deed. Hence this character is an integral and indispensable part of the play.

It would now be advantageous to turn back and review for a moment the four external influences which have been mentioned, and observe their gradation. The hasty marriage of the mother is the first one, wherein Hamlet only surmises. In the second, which is the Ghost, the whole affair is revealed. The declamation of the actor on the subject of Hecuba, and the subsequent play, constitute the third; it must not be forgotten that the matter is something feigned — not real; the story is a myth; instead of action, it is action represented. The fourth influence — the expedition of Fortinbras — is the deed itself, which now appears before him in its full reality. But neither the representation nor the reality can bring him to the point of action. It is evident that the last and highest effort has been expended, and from now on the nature of these influences and the character of Hamlet must change.

What is he to do? Kill himself—but that is impossible; he can no more kill himself than kill the King. The question of suicide was settled, as will be remembered, in the well-known soliloquy on that subject. He can only let come what comes, defending himself, perhaps, against the attempts of others; but the great aggressive act, which includes all acts, must remain unperformed. But what is about to come? The consequences of even what he has already done are rapidly returning upon him; the King, goaded by suspicion, has resolved upon his destruction; Laertes, the avenger of Polonius' murder, is near at hand and crying for his blood. The external influences are no longer mere examples brought forward to incite him to action, but he is now involved in their meshes; they seize hold of him and carry him along irresistibly in their movement. Hence he must also experience the bitter fact that he is controlled by something outside of his own intelligence, upon which, hitherto, he has had the firmest reliance.

✓ II. We have now arrived at the turning-point of the drama; here begins the second movement of the Hamlet thread. Its essential thought is the great change in the conviction of Hamlet—a change which is the forerunner of his tragic destiny. A series of incidents now determine him within and without; external forces could not drive him to action, but they henceforth rush forward with him to death.

First comes the capture of Hamlet by the pirates, and his sudden return. It is a most strange occurrence, and has always given great difficulty. Accident, contrary to the general rule of the Poet, seems to determine the course of things in the most startling manner, and the whole poem to be made to rest upon a most improbable event.

Hamlet is sent to England; a pirate pursues his ship and grapples with it; he boards the strange vessel, when it suddenly cuts loose with Hamlet alone, and afterwards puts him safely on shore. The whole proceeding is so suspicious that, were such an event to occur in real life, everybody would think at once of collusion. This impression is much strengthened by the confidence with which he speaks of his ability to foil all the machinations of the King in sending him to England:

— "Let it work,
For 'tis the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petar; and it shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines
And blow them at the moon."

Indeed, he rejoices in the prospect:

— "O, 'tis most sweet
When in one line two crafts directly meet."

Note how absolute his trust still is in his intelligence. Such confidence seems to be begotten of preparation. One is inclined, therefore, to explain the occurrence in this way: Hamlet hired the pretended pirate, and gave to its officers his instructions before he left port; indeed, he most probably had also some understanding with the officers of the royal ship which was to convey him. Yet this view, apparently so well founded, we must at once abandon when we read Hamlet's account of the affair (Act V, Scene 2). In that he ascribes his action wholly to instinct; there was no premeditation, no planning at all. But what is more astonishing, he has come to prefer unconscious impulse to deliberation; he has renounced intelligence as the guide of conduct. Yet, before this

event, how he delighted in his skill, in his counterplots, in his intellectual dexterity!

Now, what is the cause of this great change in his character? In the first place, it ought to be observed that the expressions above quoted were uttered by him when there might be still some hope of being brought to action before the last and strongest influence — the appearance of Fortinbras — revealed to him that his case was desperate. But the great cause of his conversion was this startling event, in which he saw that Accident, or some external power, was mistress over the best-matured plans of men. Here is an element which had never been included in his calculations, upon which, heretofore, he had placed so great reliance; suddenly they are swept down by this unknown force. He sees that it is objectively valid in the world, but he knows that he himself is not, for he cannot do the deed; hence he must believe in it more than in himself. Hamlet thus becomes a convert from Intelligence to Fate, from self-determination to external determination. So must every person without Will be, to a greater or lesser extent, a disbeliever in Will; for his sole experience is that man is controlled from without. Thus it can be seen that the introduction of this accident is based upon the weightiest grounds, and is in the completest harmony with the development of the drama. Accident appears here in a manner which is legitimate in Art — not to cut a complicated knot or to create a sudden surprise, but to determine character.

Now follows another most remarkable, yet strictly logical, transition. This man — whose irresolution has become an intellectual conviction; who has even renounced his belief in action and made himself the puppet of chance;

who has thus, as near as possible without suicide, stripped himself of a real existence in the world—where next shall we find him? In the grave-yard, alive; for, as before stated, he cannot destroy himself. Thus he is brought to the very abode of death, without entering the door. The grave is that bit of earth which contains man when he absolutely ceases to act; he is laid away in it when his body can no longer assert itself, but becomes the prey of the elements. Reality ends there, and possibility begins.

But Hamlet is still alive, and, hence, not yet ready for this final resting-place. Now, for the living, the grave-yard, above all other localities, is the home of meditation; every one feels this influence within its borders; each small mound calls up an infinitude of possibilities. The hum of the actual world is removed, and the future here strikes into the present and absorbs us into itself for the moment. But the future cannot be *realized*, for, when it is real, it is the present. Hence Hamlet, with his subjective, contemplative nature, must find in this spot a most congenial theme for his reflection; he will not be annoyed by the bustling activity of the world, nor pushed on by any necessity to do his deed.

But even the grave-yard—the end of activity—has still an activity of its own, and must also furnish a contrast to Hamlet, which will be seen to disturb him. It is an humble calling, though none the less real—we allude to the grave-diggers. They seem to have an air of indifference and nonchalance which ill accord with the character of the place, and even grate somewhat upon the feelings. But this is just the point; grave-digging is their daily occupation, which they go about unhesitatingly; and again Hamlet beholds men who practically fulfill their calling,

however humble and repulsive it may be. Thus the common laborer is also brought in with his lesson; for the low estate of these grave-diggers appears to be strongly emphasized by the Poet. To their simple minds the great forms of the world are quite devoid of content or meaning. They talk of Christianity and Law with the most grotesque formality, which becomes the more ridiculous by their attempted adherence to formal Logic. One is inclined to say: A fit place for all such forms when they have lost their inner substance—the grave-yard. It is here shown how the ignorant rabble must regard the highest concrete truth; it loses its entire spirit, and degenerates into an empty formalism. So these grave-diggers exhibit their mode of viewing the great questions of the world, but they soon come down to the more congenial element of banter and jest, and, at last, to the gross appetite—in a stoup of liquor. One of them is humming a ditty of youthful love, while at work, when Hamlet appears. O the harsh contrast! “Hath this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?” No, Hamlet, no; that is his business, which he goes to work at and does without thinking any more about the matter. Still another blow is given to Hamlet by the grave-digger. The man who confounded and befooled the court with his quibbles is now beaten at his own game by one of the humblest of mortals. He has proscribed his own intellect; its brightness must wane.

It was stated that the grave-yard is the home of meditation. The mind looks in two directions, and feeds itself upon its own contemplations—forward into the future when it pictures to itself the world to come, and backward into the past when its principal theme will be the transi-

toriness of human power and glory. The former has been fully considered by Hamlet in the soliloquy on suicide, and, hence, cannot be repeated here. The latter—transitoriness—comes now in its turn, and, consequently, we find Hamlet indulging in those gloomy reflections in which his melancholy and contemplative nature takes so great pleasure. He is in the presence of extinct individualities; imagine what they were—behold what they are. He runs through the scale, dwelling upon the lawyer with sarcastic delight, and loading him with quibbles and gibberish as if to smother him with his own lumber; also recounting with exquisite pathos his boyish remembrances of the clown, Yorick. Mark the difference of style between these two passages, and see how absolutely Shakespeare adapts the form to the subject. Finally, Alexander and Cæsar, the mightiest men of action of the past, are called up, judged merely by their transient bodily existence, and found to be—dust. We need not speak of the positive and eternal principle in these towering individualities—that they are now living, and will live forever, by their deeds in the history of the world; but this is a fact which the contemplation of Hamlet must ignore, since it dwells upon the negative, finite element of humanity. Hamlet has thus passed from the presence of the living hero, Fortinbras, to the presence of the dead hero, Alexander; and a corresponding transition is made in his own character. For, if Fortinbras, with the pressure of the real world, cannot excite him to activity—if his conviction is that man is swayed solely by external forces, then there remains nothing for him but the grave-yard, whither he may go and dwell in contemplation, and, finally, have his deedless body stowed away there in the

earth. This last state, we may rest assured, cannot now be far off.

With Alexander and Cæsar he must stop; he cannot go higher; hence, at this convenient moment, there passes by the funeral procession of Ophelia. The old affection rouses in him the dormant man, and impulse sways him once again. Moreover, her death is an indirect consequence of his conduct; Nemesis begins to work. But what shall we say to this grave-scene? It is certainly extravagant, but perhaps justifiable, through the participating characters. Laertes, in accordance with his hasty nature, leaps into the grave of his sister and indulges in the wildest grief. But Hamlet follows him, and even surpasses him in extravagance! Hamlet here again acts from his emotions and impulses; the love for Ophelia, and the circumstances of her death, return upon him like the rush of an overwhelming ocean, and bear down all moderation. He, for once, is mad, as every such man is momentarily mad. It is our opinion that he does not here feign madness; the motives thereto are all gone; the King knows his secret designs, and he must know that the King knows them. It is the love and death of Ophelia which furnish the cause for this extraordinary spectacle.

There is another contrast in this scene which is too striking to be omitted. Every one speaks with the greatest tenderness and affection of the sweet Ophelia; in the memories of all she is embalmed in love and peace. But there is one exception—the priest. He has no share in the general sorrow; he would even exclude from the rites of decent burial the frail maiden who had lost reason and life together. He is thus placed with the clownish grave-diggers—not only in the character of adherence to

empty form, but also in the special subject of conversation, for their discussion is about the Christian burial of one that has committed suicide. Thus Ophelia is laid to rest; Hamlet's acts are beginning to return upon him in his intense sorrow; but a deeper thrust is at hand, for he has already been brought face to face with the avenger.

Next comes the conversation in which Hamlet tells Horatio the circumstances of his escape. He attributes his action wholly to instinct and presentiment, and now, for the first time, he indicates fully the great change which has come over himself. He ascribes to accident, and not to any prearranged plan, the rescue by the pirates. On board the vessel he acted from a secret, irresistible impulse; behold the result. This event has changed his whole view of the world. Hitherto his faith in intelligence was unbounded; his confidence in his own ability to counteract all hostile schemes had never failed; even when he is told that he must go to England, he, with exultation, declares:

"But I will delve one yard below their mines
And blow them at the moon."

But this strange accident upon the sea has changed his entire way of thinking. Now he believes that often indiscretion serves better than the profoundest deliberation; that destiny rules the hour; that there is an extra-human agency which overrules the activity of man:

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

In a later passage, just before he goes to fence with Laertes, he enunciates the same doctrine in a stronger form.

Thus Hamlet abjures Intelligence, which he thinks has been so baneful to him; he resigns himself into the hands of Fate, which is the divinity above mentioned; he is now ready to obey the first prompting of his soul. We have before attempted to show that this conversion of Hamlet to a belief in destiny was a necessary consequence of his intellectual point of view, for he has now become acquainted with something possessing objective validity, of which his subjective spirit is able to give no adequate account, and which it does not possess. Hence he comes to believe in external determination—in action without forethought. Thus, under impulse, he commits the forgery which sends to death the two royal messengers; but, true to his old character, he can still ask the question whether he ought in conscience to slay that King whom, in addition to the other crimes against him, he has just caught laying a snare for his destruction.

But the final consummation, the last transition—that from the grave-yard to the grave—is at hand. Osrick, in the absence of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, comes to invite Hamlet to fence with Laertes. This courtier is described in full—more fully, perhaps, than his importance warrants. Hamlet we see here at his old tricks, with his love of sly, obscure satire which confounds his victim and comes near confounding his reader. We cannot get his exact meaning, but we do perceive very distinctly the drift; it is directed against the person at hand, who is too dull to comprehend it, as was seen in the case of Polonius. Osrick exhibits the hollowness and formalism into which everything had fallen; it is a drossy age which has lost all substantial worth, contrasting thereby with the deep moral nature of Hamlet. But the match is

agreed on, though Hamlet still has presentiments. Here he falls into the trap; and one thinks, if he had been as shrewd now as upon former occasions, he would not have been caught. Undoubtedly the plan against Hamlet is not more profound than many others which he has seen through — why, then, should it succeed? For the reason that Hamlet's view of the moral order of things is changed; he no longer believes that man can determine anything; one act is as good as another for bringing about a result; whether he goes or declines is all the same in the eye of Fate. Hence he resigns himself to destiny, and the cautious Hamlet blindly proceeds to what comes first.

The two combatants are brought together. Hamlet begs pardon of Laertes, and declares that all the wrongs done by him to Laertes were the result of madness. This means merely impulse — the momentary absence of reason — else we must suppose Hamlet guilty of wanton falsehood, and, besides, destroy the whole meaning of the poem. Here is found the motive for Laertes' generous candor at death, when he discloses the infamous scheme of the King. So they are reconciled, yet they fall by each other's hand; they are incited not so much by *personal* grievances against each other, as they are the avenging instruments of Wrong. Nor must we omit to mention the absolute logical precision and necessity of this mutual destruction; for the Poet himself has reminded us of the fact lest it might escape our notice. Hamlet, the son, is seeking revenge for a father slain. But he slays Polonius, who is also a father, and thus commits the very crime whose punishment is his sole object. In being an avenger he calls up against himself an avenger, who is, therefore, the son of Polonius — Laertes. The execution

of his will thus involves his own destruction, and, moreover, the special manner of his destruction. But Laertes, too, must perish, for he also has willed murder, and become the instrument of the murderer of a father, though he is himself seeking to avenge a father's murder.

It will be observed that these deaths at the end of the play seem to be accidental, though, to a certain extent, mediated by the plan of the King and Laertes. They, too, are involved—a result which they did not expect; but the sensuous side must have always an element of accident, because it is externality. What we must look for is the logic of these deaths. Have the persons done that which justifies their fate? Do their deeds imply destruction when taken in a universal sense? In other words, have they only been overtaken by justice, by the irrevocable consequences of their acts? For Art must exhibit the deed in its completeness—in its return to itself. If we examine the actions of the various persons swept away in the course of this play we shall find that all have done something which deserved death—that the idea of Retribution is imprinted on every character. Each one has willed that which, by logical necessity, involves his own destruction. Nor has the Poet failed to express this thought repeatedly. Laertes seems so impressed with the notion of Retribution that he states it three times:

Osrick.—How is't, Laertes?

Laertes.—Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe,
I'm justly killed with mine own treachery. ✓

Again:

—“The foul practice
Hath turned itself on me; lo! here I lie,
Never to rise again.” ✓

Speaking of the King:

—“ He is justly served ;
It is a poison tempered by himself.”

But even here Hamlet can only act under the spur of impulse ; angered by what Laertes tells him, he rushes up and stabs the King, just as he slew Polonius. Hamlet perishes, and we see impulse in its results. Rational action alone can be moral, for it can distinguish its objects. Hamlet confesses that he was wrong in killing Polonius, and regrets it ; still, he must bear the consequences of his deed. It is now brought home to him through the son — Laertes.

Hamlet's dying request to Horatio is to report his cause aright, that a wounded name might not live behind him. Thus, at the very last breath, we see a manifestation of that beautiful moral nature — which desires that its motives be set right before the world. Moreover, he gives his dying voice for Fortinbras, the man of action, as the sovereign most suitable for ruling his country. And we hope that it will not seem wholly fanciful to the reader if we point out a deeper signification in this last injunction to Horatio : It means the writing of this drama. For how else can the desire of Hamlet be fulfilled — to have his story told to the world ? The poem, therefore, accounts for itself ; Horatio is to be poet, and he even states the argument of his work in his conversation with Fortinbras. These are the words :

“ And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about, so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook,
Fallen on the inventors' heads.”

Thus ends the greatest of plays, with Fortinbras and Horatio — ruler and poet — master of the actual world and master of the ideal world; the former is the chief actor, who moulds the reality; the latter is the thinking artist, who transmutes the reality into the transparent forms of Beauty. In this way Shakespeare has given a positive solution to the collision, and has also accounted for his drama.

SECTION IV. — THE KING'S THREAD.

In the third part of this essay the external influences have been shown, the object of which was to incite Hamlet to action. In them was seen the character of Hamlet reflected in a great variety of shapes, yet having always the same logical basis. Here is found, undoubtedly, the leading element of the play. But to this action there is a counter-action, which must now be developed. We saw in the first great movement that Hamlet's obstacle was chiefly in himself; that he could not force himself to do the deed, though the most powerful impulsion from without was urging him forward. Now comes the external opposition, which seems trifling compared with the former. The King and the court are upon his track, yet how easily are they baffled! He could sink them all were he at one with himself. Hence the internal collision is the main one in the play. But it is time for us to pass to the external collision.

I. The King is the person with whom Hamlet carries on this external conflict; the others are the instruments of the King. Hence we have here a series of characters — Polonius and his children, the Queen, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern — who have the same end as the King, or, at least, are all means for the execution of his purpose.

Hence they are more or less remotely involved in the same destruction. Hamlet has no such instruments, for the reason that he must first make up his mind to accomplish the deed before he can employ them — which resolution, if he makes it, is out of his power of realization. Hence the only character on his side is Horatio, a friend from the University, and a foreigner, whose chief function is to know the plans and motives of Hamlet, and to be present at the leading events, since he is to be the poet of this drama, and the vindicator of Hamlet's conduct. Thus he hovers over the poem from beginning to end, without much definiteness of character, and without saying or doing hardly anything beyond what is necessary to indicate his presence. He thus acts as a foil to exhibit Hamlet's designs and motives. When the latter has not Horatio to talk with, he has to talk with himself about these matters ; hence the predominance of soliloquy in this play. }

It is otherwise with the King ; he can act, and has acted, and, hence, knows the use of instruments. The course of his action is twofold — first, to discover the cause of Hamlet's melancholy ; and, second, when he has made that discovery, to get rid of a man with such a dangerous secret. The presupposition of his conduct, and, in fact, of the play itself, is a previous crime — the murder of Hamlet's father, by which he came to the throne. The curse is at work from the start ; suspicion against the son of the murdered King harasses his bosom, which suspicion is intensified by the strange demeanor of the son. Here the struggle begins. To find out what is the matter with Hamlet — to discover whether he knows the secret of his father's murder — is the first great object of Claudius ; for this purpose the characters above mentioned are intro-

duced. But they, too, are to be judged by their deeds ; the law of responsibility applies to them also. Hamlet, on the contrary, carefully avoids detection ; to cover his thoughts and plans more effectually, he throws over them the night of lunacy. We have already shown, in the first part of the present essay, that this disguise was especially adapted to deceive Polonius, whom, on account of his reputation and position, the King was sure to set on Hamlet's track. It is to be observed that the King was shrewder than his minister. He did not believe that Hamlet was crazy, from the start, though evidently putting a great deal of faith in Polonius. Thus arises that peculiar and dexterous struggle, in which Hamlet seeks to conceal his thoughts and purposes, and the King tries to discover them. The second part of this counter-movement is when Hamlet, by his "play within the play," shows that he is aware of the great secret. Here is the point where the conscience of the King is aroused ; the most fearful struggle rends his bosom ; he knows not whether to retrace his steps and repent of his old crime, or to retain his wife and realm by committing a new crime. At last he resolves upon the latter, and, hence, his object now is to get rid of Hamlet. For both these purposes he uses as instruments those persons whose characters are now to be given.

First, in reference to the character of the King. He is exhibited in no absolutely depraved light by the drama ; in fact, he seems to desire to live and reign honestly from this time forward, provided there is no reckoning for the past ; Hamlet, he has declared, shall be his heir ; also, his calmness and self-possession, in very trying circumstances, win our favorable regard. Moreover, he shows, repeatedly, strong compunctions of conscience for his crime ; he

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Thus Hamlet abjures Intelligence, which he thinks has been so baneful to him; he resigns himself into the hands of Fate, which is the divinity above mentioned; he is now ready to obey the first prompting of his soul. We have before attempted to show that this conversion of Hamlet to a belief in destiny was a necessary consequence of his intellectual point of view, for he has now become acquainted with something possessing objective validity, of which his subjective spirit is able to give no adequate account, and which it does not possess. Hence he comes to believe in external determination—in action without forethought. Thus, under impulse, he commits the forgery which sends to death the two royal messengers; but, true to his old character, he can still ask the question whether he ought in conscience to slay that King whom, in addition to the other crimes against him, he has just caught laying a snare for his destruction.

But the final consummation, the last transition—that from the grave-yard to the grave—is at hand. Osrick, in the absence of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, comes to invite Hamlet to fence with Laertes. This courtier is described in full—more fully, perhaps, than his importance warrants. Hamlet we see here at his old tricks, with his love of sly, obscure satire which confounds his victim and comes near confounding his reader. We cannot get his exact meaning, but we do perceive very distinctly the drift; it is directed against the person at hand, who is too dull to comprehend it, as was seen in the case of Polonius. Osrick exhibits the hollowness and formalism into which everything had fallen; it is a drossy age which has lost all substantial worth, contrasting thereby with the deep moral nature of Hamlet. But the match is

agreed on, though Hamlet still has presentiments. Here he falls into the trap; and one thinks, if he had been as shrewd now as upon former occasions, he would not have been caught. Undoubtedly the plan against Hamlet is not more profound than many others which he has seen through — why, then, should it succeed? For the reason that Hamlet's view of the moral order of things is changed; he no longer believes that man can determine anything; one act is as good as another for bringing about a result; whether he goes or declines is all the same in the eye of Fate. Hence he resigns himself to destiny, and the cautious Hamlet blindly proceeds to what comes first.

The two combatants are brought together. Hamlet begs pardon of Laertes, and declares that all the wrongs done by him to Laertes were the result of madness. This means merely impulse — the momentary absence of reason — else we must suppose Hamlet guilty of wanton falsehood, and, besides, destroy the whole meaning of the poem. Here is found the motive for Laertes' generous candor at death, when he discloses the infamous scheme of the King. So they are reconciled, yet they fall by each other's hand; they are incited not so much by *personal* grievances against each other, as they are the avenging instruments of Wrong. Nor must we omit to mention the absolute logical precision and necessity of this mutual destruction; for the Poet himself has reminded us of the fact lest it might escape our notice. Hamlet, the son, is seeking revenge for a father slain. But he slays Polonius, who is also a father, and thus commits the very crime whose punishment is his sole object. In being an avenger he calls up against himself an avenger, who is, therefore, the son of Polonius — Laertes. The execution

of his will thus involves his own destruction, and, moreover, the special manner of his destruction. But Laertes, too, must perish, for he also has willed murder, and become the instrument of the murderer of a father, though he is himself seeking to avenge a father's murder.

It will be observed that these deaths at the end of the play seem to be accidental, though, to a certain extent, mediated by the plan of the King and Laertes. They, too, are involved — a result which they did not expect; but the sensuous side must have always an element of accident, because it is externality. What we must look for is the logic of these deaths. Have the persons done that which justifies their fate? Do their deeds imply destruction when taken in a universal sense? In other words, have they only been overtaken by justice, by the irrevocable consequences of their acts? For Art must exhibit the deed in its completeness — in its return to itself. If we examine the actions of the various persons swept away in the course of this play we shall find that all have done something which deserved death — that the idea of Retribution is imprinted on every character. Each one has willed that which, by logical necessity, involves his own destruction. Nor has the Poet failed to express this thought repeatedly. Laertes seems so impressed with the notion of Retribution that he states it three times :

Osrick. — How is't, Laertes?

Laertes. — Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe,
I'm justly killed with mine own treachery. ✓

Again :

— " The foul practice
Hath turned itself on me; lo! here I lie,
Never to rise again." ✓

Speaking of the King :

— "He is justly served ;
It is a poison tempered by himself."

But even here Hamlet can only act under the spur of impulse ; angered by what Laertes tells him, he rushes up and stabs the King, just as he slew Polonius. Hamlet perishes, and we see impulse in its results. Rational action alone can be moral, for it can distinguish its objects. Hamlet confesses that he was wrong in killing Polonius, and regrets it ; still, he must bear the consequences of his deed. It is now brought home to him through the son — Laertes.

Hamlet's dying request to Horatio is to report his cause aright, that a wounded name might not live behind him. Thus, at the very last breath, we see a manifestation of that beautiful moral nature — which desires that its motives be set right before the world. Moreover, he gives his dying voice for Fortinbras, the man of action, as the sovereign most suitable for ruling his country. And we hope that it will not seem wholly fanciful to the reader if we point out a deeper signification in this last injunction to Horatio : It means the writing of this drama. For how else can the desire of Hamlet be fulfilled — to have his story told to the world ? The poem, therefore, accounts for itself ; Horatio is to be poet, and he even states the argument of his work in his conversation with Fortinbras. These are the words :

"And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about, so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook,
Fallen on the inventors' heads."

Thus ends the greatest of plays, with Fortinbras and Horatio — ruler and poet — master of the actual world and master of the ideal world; the former is the chief actor, who moulds the reality; the latter is the thinking artist, who transmutes the reality into the transparent forms of Beauty. In this way Shakespeare has given a positive solution to the collision, and has also accounted for his drama.

SECTION IV. — THE KING'S THREAD.

In the third part of this essay the external influences have been shown, the object of which was to incite Hamlet to action. In them was seen the character of Hamlet reflected in a great variety of shapes, yet having always the same logical basis. Here is found, undoubtedly, the leading element of the play. But to this action there is a counter-action, which must now be developed. We saw in the first great movement that Hamlet's obstacle was chiefly in himself; that he could not force himself to do the deed, though the most powerful impulsion from without was urging him forward. Now comes the external opposition, which seems trifling compared with the former. The King and the court are upon his track, yet how easily are they baffled! He could sink them all were he at one with himself. Hence the internal collision is the main one in the play. But it is time for us to pass to the external collision.

I. The King is the person with whom Hamlet carries on this external conflict; the others are the instruments of the King. Hence we have here a series of characters — Polonius and his children, the Queen, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern — who have the same end as the King, or, at least, are all means for the execution of his purpose.

Hence they are more or less remotely involved in the same destruction. Hamlet has no such instruments, for the reason that he must first make up his mind to accomplish the deed before he can employ them — which resolution, if he makes it, is out of his power of realization. Hence the only character on his side is Horatio, a friend from the University, and a foreigner, whose chief function is to know the plans and motives of Hamlet, and to be present at the leading events, since he is to be the poet of this drama, and the vindicator of Hamlet's conduct. Thus he hovers over the poem from beginning to end, without much definiteness of character, and without saying or doing hardly anything beyond what is necessary to indicate his presence. He thus acts as a foil to exhibit Hamlet's designs and motives. When the latter has not Horatio to talk with, he has to talk with himself about these matters ; hence the predominance of soliloquy in this play. }

It is otherwise with the King ; he can act, and has acted, and, hence, knows the use of instruments. The course of his action is twofold — first, to discover the cause of Hamlet's melancholy ; and, second, when he has made that discovery, to get rid of a man with such a dangerous secret. The presupposition of his conduct, and, in fact, of the play itself, is a previous crime — the murder of Hamlet's father, by which he came to the throne. The curse is at work from the start ; suspicion against the son of the murdered King harasses his bosom, which suspicion is intensified by the strange demeanor of the son. Here the struggle begins. To find out what is the matter with Hamlet — to discover whether he knows the secret of his father's murder — is the first great object of Claudius ; for this purpose the characters above mentioned are intro-

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professes to have broken off the match for reasons of State. Finally, it is his own cunning which brings him to sudden death, through his concealment behind the arras. Cunning thus destroys itself.

This brings us to consider the manner of his death, which is often thought to be harsh and repulsive, and, in addition, an unnecessary incident in the play. The first question to be asked is, has he done anything to merit such a fate? Undoubtedly; for he has shown himself the willing instrument of the King in all the schemes against young Hamlet; and it is hinted that his present influential position is owing to the hand he had in the conspiracy against the elder Hamlet. Polonius has, therefore, merited the Retribution which has come. But is Hamlet justified in killing him? Undoubtedly not. Hamlet acts upon impulse; makes a mistake which brings, ultimately, Retribution upon himself at the hands of Laertes. Though Polonius deserves death, yet Hamlet cannot rightfully be the executioner; hence guilt falls upon him. All this is expressed by Hamlet himself, who fully appreciates his situation, and declares his repentance for the act:

— “For this same lord
I do repent, but Heaven hath pleased it so
To punish me with this and this with me, ¹
That I should be their scourge and minister.”

Here he states that he was the instrument for the punishment of Polonius, and that the murder of Polonius was the instrument of his own punishment. The death of Polonius is, therefore, not an accident in the play, in the sense that it is not motived beforehand; it also shows how Hamlet can act from impulse before reflection sets in, and that such action plunges him into the deepest guilt. Act-

ing from impulse, he slays the wrong one, but, as a rational being, he must be held responsible for his deed. Another distinction should be kept in the mind: Polonius is a subject, and, hence, amenable to law; while the King, as the fountain of justice, is above law, and, hence, can be punished only by murder.

II. Here we touch the second movement. Retribution will now set in toward the criminals. Thus punishment must be inflicted on Hamlet—but by whom? Here appears Laertes, the son of Polonius, in accordance with the strictest Retribution; for Hamlet is seeking revenge for a father slain, and yet has himself slain a father, whose son, according to his own logic, must now rise up and try to kill him. Laertes is a chip of the old block, with the difference of age. For what the young man tries to carry by storm and impulse, the old man tries to obtain through cunning. Both are equally devoid of an ethical content to their lives. How much they are alike, and how completely Hamlet's character lies outside of their comprehension, may be seen in the advice which both give to Ophelia concerning Hamlet.

The first fact which is brought to our notice about Laertes is his request to return to France, which fact is an offset to the desire of Hamlet to go back to Wittenberg. We have already shown the importance of this stroke in the life and character of Hamlet. Equally important and suggestive is the statement concerning Laertes. It indicates that he sought and possessed the French culture, in contrast to the German culture of Hamlet. The French have been in all times noted for the stress they lay upon the externalities of life. In whatever pertains to etiquette, polite intercourse, and fashion,

they have been the teachers of Europe, and have elaborated a language which most adequately expresses this phase of human existence. But it must be said that the perfection of the External has been attended with a corresponding loss of the Internal—that the graces have not only hidden, but often extinguished, the virtues.

In this school Laertes has been educated, and herein is a striking contrast to the deep moral nature of Hamlet. He has, therefore, the advantage of not being restrained by any uncomfortable scruples, and here again the contrast with Hamlet is prominent. Laertes can act. Yet he proceeds from impulse, though he has sufficient cause for anger; hence he, too, is on the point of killing the wrong one, just as Hamlet did in the case of Polonius. That Laertes is ready to destroy the whole ethical order of the world in his revenge—that his nature is quite devoid of the great moral principles of action, is shown in the following words:

“To Hell, allegiance! vows to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand—
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged.”

No doubt he is now in a high passion, but this is just his characteristic. Here he openly abjures conscience, religion, fidelity—the very basis upon which the moral system of things must rest. Yet we find that, in the end, he does acknowledge one controlling principle, the emptiest and most worthless of all—honor, which, however, does not prevent him from entering into a rather dishonorable conspiracy with the King against Hamlet. Such is Laertes; yet he is not without a generous, gallant element

in his character. Witness at his death the forgiveness which he asks of Hamlet. He dies because he has willed the death of Hamlet, which, though merited, he cannot inflict as an individual. Moreover, he assails his own principle in becoming the instrument of the King against Hamlet; for he, the avenger of a father, is aiding the murderer of a father against just such an avenger as himself. His act, therefore, logically involves his death; also, he is a subject, and must resort to the court of justice; hence has not the excuse of Hamlet for the murder of Claudius, since the King, being the source of justice itself, cannot well be subsumed under his own creature.

Ophelia also becomes an instrument against Hamlet, through her father. She is one of the fairest of our Poet's creations, whose very beauty lies in her frail and delicate nature. We feel from the first that she is too weak to endure the contradictions of life; that a flower so tender must perish in the first rude storm. The Poet has given the logical basis of her insanity in the strictest manner. Her whole nature is embraced in one word — Love. She has no individuality of her own; she is wholly wrapped up in the father and lover; for the mother cannot well appear here, since it would be only a repetition of herself. Her reliance upon others is, therefore, absolute. Now comes the rudest shock which can assail a woman; both props are torn from under her, and there remains nothing for her support. Her lover goes crazy — for that is her belief — and slays her father. Her mind has no longer any center at all, because it has none in itself; insanity during a short time follows, and, ultimately, death by accident; for she was dead in thought, but could only perish by accident, since she was crazy,

and, hence, irresponsible. Her snatches of old songs exhibit the working of memory and imagination, and other forms of mental activity, without the controlling principle of reason; hence she runs into licentious fancies, super-induced, no doubt, by the previous conversations of Polonius, Hamlet, and Laertes. Here we have an undoubted case of destruction without guilt; but, as before remarked, in the case of Hamlet, a certain degree of individuality is the very condition of existence; no one can live who cannot endure the conditions of life. Ophelia perishes through her beauty; that which constitutes the strongest charm of her character is what makes her greatest weakness. We may contrast her with Portia, who possesses the side of individuality without losing her ethical character or true womanhood. But Ophelia is all trust, all dependence, upon others; there is no trace of selfishness or self-reliance even; she can hardly think of herself. Hence the sweetness, beauty, loveliness, of her character; but, alas! hence also its utter frailty. That Hamlet should fall in love with one whose ethical nature was so consonant with his own is a necessity.

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In connection with the Queen a question of some interest arises concerning the reason why she does not perceive the Ghost when it is seen and addressed by Hamlet (Act III, Scene 4). The common supposition seems to be that the Poet desires to indicate that it is merely a subjective ghost, and some critics have gone so far as to recommend its entire banishment from the stage in this scene. The Poet, however, introduces it, and makes it address Hamlet in this very passage. We cannot think,

duced. But they, too, are to be judged by their deeds ; the law of responsibility applies to them also. Hamlet, on the contrary, carefully avoids detection ; to cover his thoughts and plans more effectually, he throws over them the night of lunacy. We have already shown, in the first part of the present essay, that this disguise was especially adapted to deceive Polonius, whom, on account of his reputation and position, the King was sure to set on Hamlet's track. It is to be observed that the King was shrewder than his minister. He did not believe that Hamlet was crazy, from the start, though evidently putting a great deal of faith in Polonius. Thus arises that peculiar and dexterous struggle, in which Hamlet seeks to conceal his thoughts and purposes, and the King tries to discover them. The second part of this counter-movement is when Hamlet, by his "play within the play," shows that he is aware of the great secret. Here is the point where the conscience of the King is aroused ; the most fearful struggle rends his bosom ; he knows not whether to retrace his steps and repent of his old crime, or to retain his wife and realm by committing a new crime. At last he resolves upon the latter, and, hence, his object now is to get rid of Hamlet. For both these purposes he uses as instruments those persons whose characters are now to be given.

First, in reference to the character of the King. He is exhibited in no absolutely depraved light by the drama ; in fact, he seems to desire to live and reign honestly from this time forward, provided there is no reckoning for the past ; Hamlet, he has declared, shall be his heir ; also, his calmness and self-possession, in very trying circumstances, win our favorable regard. Moreover, he shows, repeatedly, strong compunctions of conscience for his crime ; he

wishes the act undone, if it occasions no loss to him. He is, therefore, an extreme example of that large class of people who seek to repent of their misdeeds, yet want to retain all the profits thereof. That he does not proceed openly with violence against Hamlet rests upon two grounds mainly — his fear of the people, who idolize the young Prince, and the affection of the Queen for her son. Thus the King also has two collisions — the external one with Hamlet, and the internal one with himself. The latter is most powerful; he has committed a crime which he seeks, yet is unable, to make undone without its undoing himself; repentance involves his death, since he must confess his crime to the world and surrender all its advantages, namely, his kingdom and his queen, and then submit to the penalty of the law. Repentance thus seems to him to annihilate the very end for which it exists — to become self-contradictory; for, if it destroys men, thinks he, what is the use of their repentance? To repent is death; not to repent is death; he wills to do, yet not to do. But he cannot stand still; his deed is upon him; he has to bolster it up by a new murder. Hence he commences plotting against the life of Hamlet, who, at last, falls through his machinations. Thus crime begets crime. His retribution, however, comes in full; he perishes by the hand of him whose death he has sought and whose father he has slain.

The leading instrument of the King against Hamlet is, very naturally, Polonius, whose life has been devoted to reading the secret thoughts and plans of others, and concealing his own. In him we see the shrewd diplomat; and we cannot help thinking that the Poet drew this character from the Italian diplomacy of his own and preceding

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ages. The fundamental characteristic of Polonius is cunning—cunning as the absolute basis of conduct. Now, cunning is not to be eschewed within its proper limitations; but, when it is made the highest rule of action, it must necessarily assail, and attempt to subordinate, the ethical principles of the world. For, if it is the highest, Right, Morality, Religion, are inferior, and must be disregarded. Such, in general, is the consciousness of Polonius, which age and long habit have so confirmed that it is seen in the most trivial affairs of life, and makes him often have a decidedly comic tinge. Cunning thus becomes anything but cunning—destroys itself. He does not believe in an ethical order of things, or, rather, is totally ignorant of the same. The world is governed wholly by adroit management, according to him; the external side of life—conventionalities—are the most important element of knowledge. This is seen in the parting advice given to his son: Excellent precepts for external conduct, but, on the whole, a system of selfishness, whose germ is “to thine own self be true,” which here means the narrow individual. Note that there is no allusion to moral principles as the guides of human conduct; in fact, we learn, in another place, that he would even be pleased to learn of the moral derelictions of his son, as the “flash and outbreak of a fiery mind.” Moreover, he has no faith in the sincerity of Hamlet’s love for Ophelia, or, perhaps, no faith in love at all; in his judgment it is lust, with ulterior designs.

Such a man stands in direct opposition to Hamlet; the latter, therefore, has for him, not only dislike, but also the most unqualified contempt. Hence Polonius has no comprehension of such a character. Hamlet worries him

by dark sayings, which have always a secret sting, and utterly confounds him at his own game. It would almost seem as if the Poet meant to show the folly of cunning—how it completely contradicts and destroys itself. He sends Reynaldo to Paris to look after his son, and gives some very shrewd instructions. At first one is inclined to ask, if he cannot trust his own son, why should he trust his servant, and who is to watch the latter? For the basis of his conduct is distrust. But what is the use of the information when he gets it? None at all; for he allows to his son those very vices which he sent Reynaldo to observe. Also, in the play we hear no more of the matter; this scene was, therefore, simply to show the leading trait of Polonius.

His object, then, was espionage, for its own sake; management—not for any end, but to be a managing; he thus plays with his own cunning. Polonius has now reached that interesting stage of mind when he delights in cunning for its own sake, and seeks the most tortuous path when a straight one is at hand. This crookedness extends also to his language, which, before it comes to the point, takes a dart to one side and loses itself in its own prolixity. Now, such a man is set to work to ascertain the secret of Hamlet, whose nature lies outside of his intellectual horizon. How completely he is befooled is evident enough; and even the old fellow is compelled to confess that his cunning has overreached itself in thinking that Hamlet's love for his daughter was fictitious; and he feels sorry that he had not "quoted him with better heed and judgment," for, after all, he was very willing for Hamlet to be his son-in-law. In this respect also it is curious to observe his duplicity towards the King, for to the latter he

professes to have broken off the match for reasons of State. Finally, it is his own cunning which brings him to sudden death, through his concealment behind the arras. Cunning thus destroys itself.

This brings us to consider the manner of his death, which is often thought to be harsh and repulsive, and, in addition, an unnecessary incident in the play. The first question to be asked is, has he done anything to merit such a fate? Undoubtedly; for he has shown himself the willing instrument of the King in all the schemes against young Hamlet; and it is hinted that his present influential position is owing to the hand he had in the conspiracy against the elder Hamlet. Polonius has, therefore, merited the Retribution which has come. But is Hamlet justified in killing him? Undoubtedly not. Hamlet acts upon impulse; makes a mistake which brings, ultimately, Retribution upon himself at the hands of Laertes. Though Polonius deserves death, yet Hamlet cannot rightfully be the executioner; hence guilt falls upon him. All this is expressed by Hamlet himself, who fully appreciates his situation, and declares his repentance for the act:

— “For this same lord
I do repent, but Heaven hath pleased it so
To punish me with this and this with me, [♪]
That I should be their scourge and minister.”

Here he states that he was the instrument for the punishment of Polonius, and that the murder of Polonius was the instrument of his own punishment. The death of Polonius is, therefore, not an accident in the play, in the sense that it is not motived beforehand; it also shows how Hamlet can act from impulse before reflection sets in, and that such action plunges him into the deepest guilt. Act-

ing from impulse, he slays the wrong one, but, as a rational being, he must be held responsible for his deed. Another distinction should be kept in the mind: Polonius is a subject, and, hence, amenable to law; while the King, as the fountain of justice, is above law, and, hence, can be punished only by murder.

II. Here we touch the second movement. Retribution will now set in toward the criminals. Thus punishment must be inflicted on Hamlet—but by whom? Here appears Laertes, the son of Polonius, in accordance with the strictest Retribution; for Hamlet is seeking revenge for a father slain, and yet has himself slain a father, whose son, according to his own logic, must now rise up and try to kill him. Laertes is a chip of the old block, with the difference of age. For what the young man tries to carry by storm and impulse, the old man tries to obtain through cunning. Both are equally devoid of an ethical content to their lives. How much they are alike, and how completely Hamlet's character lies outside of their comprehension, may be seen in the advice which both give to Ophelia concerning Hamlet.

The first fact which is brought to our notice about Laertes is his request to return to France, which fact is an offset to the desire of Hamlet to go back to Wittenberg. We have already shown the importance of this stroke in the life and character of Hamlet. Equally important and suggestive is the statement concerning Laertes. It indicates that he sought and possessed the French culture, in contrast to the German culture of Hamlet. The French have been in all times noted for the stress they lay upon the externalities of life. In whatever pertains to etiquette, polite intercourse, and fashion,

they have been the teachers of Europe, and have elaborated a language which most adequately expresses this phase of human existence. But it must be said that the perfection of the External has been attended with a corresponding loss of the Internal—that the graces have not only hidden, but often extinguished, the virtues.

In this school Laertes has been educated, and herein is a striking contrast to the deep moral nature of Hamlet. He has, therefore, the advantage of not being restrained by any uncomfortable scruples, and here again the contrast with Hamlet is prominent. Laertes can act. Yet he proceeds from impulse, though he has sufficient cause for anger; hence he, too, is on the point of killing the wrong one, just as Hamlet did in the case of Polonius. That Laertes is ready to destroy the whole ethical order of the world in his revenge—that his nature is quite devoid of the great moral principles of action, is shown in the following words:

“To Hell, allegiance! vows to the blackest devil!
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No doubt he is now in a high passion, but this is just his characteristic. Here he openly abjures conscience, religion, fidelity—the very basis upon which the moral system of things must rest. Yet we find that, in the end, he does acknowledge one controlling principle, the emptiest and most worthless of all—honor, which, however, does not prevent him from entering into a rather dishonorable conspiracy with the King against Hamlet. Such is Laertes; yet he is not without a generous, gallant element

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In connection with the Queen a question of some interest arises concerning the reason why she does not perceive the Ghost when it is seen and addressed by Hamlet (Act III, Scene 4). The common supposition seems to be that the Poet desires to indicate that it is merely a subjective ghost, and some critics have gone so far as to recommend its entire banishment from the stage in this scene. The Poet, however, introduces it, and makes it address Hamlet in this very passage. We cannot think,

therefore, that he intends to destroy all the work which he was so careful hitherto in doing, namely, the preservation of the objectivity of the Ghost. It seems to us that the Poet merely intended to show that it does not lie in the character of the Queen to see ghosts. Such is the case, however, with Hamlet, and forms the great distinguishing element of his nature. Nobody besides himself ever sees the Ghost, if we except the soldiers and Horatio in the First Act, and they are made to see it for the purpose of rendering it real to the audience, and not to exhibit any fundamental principle of their character. The difficulty was to preserve the objectivity of the Ghost to the audience, and, at the same time, not to let it appear to those whose characterization would be thereby distorted. That the Ghost lies wholly in Hamlet's imagination, if the Queen, though present, does not see it, is a very natural inference; but the point is that the Poet, instead of intending to call up that inference in the minds of his audience, would have every eye behold the Ghost in its reality, as being Hamlet's great problem. Otherwise, we must grant an irreconcilable contradiction in his treatment of this subject. It ought also to be added that the purpose and character of this scene are incompatible with the Queen's seeing the ghost of her injured husband.

In conclusion, let us summon before ourselves the total movement of the play. Its presupposition is the crime of Claudius, who has murdered the King, corrupted the mother, and usurped the realm. This calls up the son, who is to requite both the murderer and the faithless mother. It is the object of the son, first, to discover the truth of the guilt; and, second, to avenge the same when dis-

covered. It is the object of the King to find out the plans of Hamlet, and then to make way with him when he has found them out. Hamlet has the assistance of one friend — Horatio; the King has the assistance of a number of persons connected with his court. The previous crime is the central point from which the two counter-movements of the play take their origin; the action of the King and Hamlet respecting this crime gives the essence of their conduct and character. Both exhibit negative phases of the ethical deed; the one refuses to do it at all, and, hence, never reaches any positive act; the other commits a crime — that is, destroys the Ethical — and then refuses to make the crime undone. It is at this point that we can see that the delinquency of both is the same: Each refuses to perform the ethical deed — the one, because he will not act; the other, because he will not repent; or, to use a figurative contrast — the one, because he will not go forward; the other, because he will not go backward. Nor must we forget the other side, which gives the internal collision. Both have a justification for the course which they pursue — the one, because through action he would be compelled to commit a crime; the other, because through repentance he would have to sacrifice his life. To force Hamlet to action the External, in the form of a series of influences, is brought to bear upon him; to force the King to action the Internal — Conscience — wields her power. But, in the one case, the External is baffled by the Internal, in the shape of Reflection and Conscience; in the other case, the Internal is baffled by the External, in the shape of worldly power, possessions, and ambition.

But now the reader himself must undertake to complete these interesting contrasts, and to work out the further

details of the drama. It is, no doubt, the profoundest of Shakespeare's plays in respect to its thought, and its collision seems to touch the very core of modern spirit. The Theoretical and the Practical, Intelligence and Will, are here exhibited in their one-sidedness, and it is shown that neither is sufficient by itself. If the play has any moral, it would seem to be that the man who refuses to translate his thought into deed is as great a criminal, or, at most, possesses as little power of salvation within himself, as he who will not undo his own deed when it is wicked.

Moreover, this play stands alone in the fact that it quite touches the very limits of the Drama itself. For the essence of the Drama is to portray some form of action; but here that form is non-action; hence the plan of the play, and the necessity for those external circumstances which were detailed in a previous section; for they must be external, since the character is essentially passive. This work is thus the culmination of Shakespeare's poetical activity, and exhibits the broadest range of his genius. The rest of his dramas depict collisions of various kinds, but it is the nature of the collision to be between higher and lower forms of Will. But here he quite sweeps the whole field of the Will, and makes it one of the colliding principles. He thus produces the most comprehensive of all dramas, and seems to exhaust the very possibilities of Dramatic Art.

COMEDY, OR MEDIATED DRAMA.

THE NATURE OF COMEDY.

I. TRANSITION FROM TRAGEDY TO COMEDY. — It has been already pointed out that the peculiarity of the tragic character is the intensity with which it seizes and carries out its purpose — an intensity only overcome by death. But is there no Mediation? Must the struggle of principles, and, indeed, of valid principles, end in destruction to man? Must that upon which reposes his rational existence overwhelm him in ruin? Such questions have all one object — a Mediation which saves the individual; they are the earnest inquiries of the soul after a plan of salvation. Even Tragedy ends in reconciliation; it brings back harmony to the Ethical World, but a harmony through death. Its solution, therefore, is negative — nay, self-destructive; for the object of the Ethical World must be to save man, in the highest sense. Can there not be, then, a reconciliation which will preserve the individual? Yes, there must be, is the answer of the modern world and of Shakespeare — the answer also of Christianity in its Divine Mediator.

Hence we are brought to consider that character which, being involved in a possible tragic collision, is saved before the final stroke of destruction. He has already fallen into guilt, or, at least, into conflict with Ethical principles; though, on the other hand, he may have grounds of justifi-

they have been the teachers of Europe, and have elaborated a language which most adequately expresses this phase of human existence. But it must be said that the perfection of the External has been attended with a corresponding loss of the Internal—that the graces have not only hidden, but often extinguished, the virtues.

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in his character. Witness at his death the forgiveness which he asks of Hamlet. He dies because he has willed the death of Hamlet, which, though merited, he cannot inflict as an individual. Moreover, he assails his own principle in becoming the instrument of the King against Hamlet; for he, the avenger of a father, is aiding the murderer of a father against just such an avenger as himself. His act, therefore, logically involves his death; also, he is a subject, and must resort to the court of justice; hence has not the excuse of Hamlet for the murder of Claudius, since the King, being the source of justice itself, cannot well be subsumed under his own creature.

Ophelia also becomes an instrument against Hamlet, through her father. She is one of the fairest of our Poet's creations, whose very beauty lies in her frail and delicate nature. We feel from the first that she is too weak to endure the contradictions of life; that a flower so tender must perish in the first rude storm. The Poet has given the logical basis of her insanity in the strictest manner. Her whole nature is embraced in one word—Love. She has no individuality of her own; she is wholly wrapped up in the father and lover; for the mother cannot well appear here, since it would be only a repetition of herself. Her reliance upon others is, therefore, absolute. Now comes the rudest shock which can assail a woman; both props are torn from under her, and there remains nothing for her support. Her lover goes crazy—for that is her belief—and slays her father. Her mind has no longer any center at all, because it has none in itself; insanity during a short time follows, and, ultimately, death by accident; for she was dead in thought, but could only perish by accident, since she was crazy,

and, hence, irresponsible. Her snatches of old songs exhibit the working of memory and imagination, and other forms of mental activity, without the controlling principle of reason; hence she runs into licentious fancies, superinduced, no doubt, by the previous conversations of Polonius, Hamlet, and Laertes. Here we have an undoubted case of destruction without guilt; but, as before remarked, in the case of Hamlet, a certain degree of individuality is the very condition of existence; no one can live who cannot endure the conditions of life. Ophelia perishes through her beauty; that which constitutes the strongest charm of her character is what makes her greatest weakness. We may contrast her with Portia, who possesses the side of individuality without losing her ethical character or true womanhood. But Ophelia is all trust, all dependence, upon others; there is no trace of selfishness or self-reliance even; she can hardly think of herself. Hence the sweetness, beauty, loveliness, of her character; but, alas! hence also its utter frailty. That Hamlet should fall in love with one whose ethical nature was so consonant with his own is a necessity.

Of quite a different character is the Queen. She has violated the very principle of womanhood, and has destroyed the ethical basis of female character. Excepting the charge of infidelity made by the Ghost, and the intimations of Hamlet, we have no declaration of the exact nature of her crime. Considering the important part she plays in the action, and the great influence which the King confesses she has over him, one is inclined sometimes to see in her a principal in the murder—a second Clytemnestra. But it must be confessed that the Poet has left the precise nature and degree of her offenses in great

uncertainty, and assuredly with design; yet few readers, perhaps, have any doubt about her being an accomplice, in some way or other, in the murder of her husband. The reason why the Poet has thrown a veil over her crimes is that he was unwilling — in fact, unable — to make Hamlet play the part of Orestes, the slayer of his own mother. It would not comport with the character of Hamlet, nor would it suit a modern audience; and, still more, it would disturb the course of the play, which demands the concentration of his revenge upon the King. If he could not kill the King, much less could he kill his own mother. Hence his revenge is to call up her conscience and emotional nature — to show the tremendous chasm between herself and the truly ethical woman; for thus she would be harassed by her own feelings more than by any punishment, since it is emotion which forms the leading characteristic of female nature. The Queen dies; for she has violated the principle of her rational existence — fidelity to the family relation. The man who corrupted her purity mixed the draught which deprived her of life; and the former was more truly destructive than the latter. But she loves Hamlet with the affection of a mother; the maternal relation is more powerful than the marital.

In connection with the Queen a question of some interest arises concerning the reason why she does not perceive the Ghost when it is seen and addressed by Hamlet (Act III, Scene 4). The common supposition seems to be that the Poet desires to indicate that it is merely a subjective ghost, and some critics have gone so far as to recommend its entire banishment from the stage in this scene. The Poet, however, introduces it, and makes it address Hamlet in this very passage. We cannot think,

therefore, that he intends to destroy all the work which he was so careful hitherto in doing, namely, the preservation of the objectivity of the Ghost. It seems to us that the Poet merely intended to show that it does not lie in the character of the Queen to see ghosts. Such is the case, however, with Hamlet, and forms the great distinguishing element of his nature. Nobody besides himself ever sees the Ghost, if we except the soldiers and Horatio in the First Act, and they are made to see it for the purpose of rendering it real to the audience, and not to exhibit any fundamental principle of their character. The difficulty was to preserve the objectivity of the Ghost to the audience, and, at the same time, not to let it appear to those whose characterization would be thereby distorted. That the Ghost lies wholly in Hamlet's imagination, if the Queen, though present, does not see it, is a very natural inference; but the point is that the Poet, instead of intending to call up that inference in the minds of his audience, would have every eye behold the Ghost in its reality, as being Hamlet's great problem. Otherwise, we must grant an irreconcilable contradiction in his treatment of this subject. It ought also to be added that the purpose and character of this scene are incompatible with the Queen's seeing the ghost of her injured husband.

In conclusion, let us summon before ourselves the total movement of the play. Its presupposition is the crime of Claudius, who has murdered the King, corrupted the mother, and usurped the realm. This calls up the son, who is to requite both the murderer and the faithless mother. It is the object of the son, first, to discover the truth of the guilt; and, second, to avenge the same when dis-

covered. It is the object of the King to find out the plans of Hamlet, and then to make way with him when he has found them out. Hamlet has the assistance of one friend — Horatio; the King has the assistance of a number of persons connected with his court. The previous crime is the central point from which the two counter-movements of the play take their origin; the action of the King and Hamlet respecting this crime gives the essence of their conduct and character. Both exhibit negative phases of the ethical deed; the one refuses to do it at all, and, hence, never reaches any positive act; the other commits a crime — that is, destroys the Ethical — and then refuses to make the crime undone. It is at this point that we can see that the delinquency of both is the same: Each refuses to perform the ethical deed — the one, because he will not act; the other, because he will not repent; or, to use a figurative contrast — the one, because he will not go forward; the other, because he will not go backward. Nor must we forget the other side, which gives the internal collision. Both have a justification for the course which they pursue — the one, because through action he would be compelled to commit a crime; the other, because through repentance he would have to sacrifice his life. To force Hamlet to action the External, in the form of a series of influences, is brought to bear upon him; to force the King to action the Internal — Conscience — wields her power. But, in the one case, the External is baffled by the Internal, in the shape of Reflection and Conscience; in the other case, the Internal is baffled by the External, in the shape of worldly power, possessions, and ambition.

But now the reader himself must undertake to complete these interesting contrasts, and to work out the further

details of the drama. It is, no doubt, the profoundest of Shakespeare's plays in respect to its thought, and its collision seems to touch the very core of modern spirit. The Theoretical and the Practical, Intelligence and Will, are here exhibited in their one-sidedness, and it is shown that neither is sufficient by itself. If the play has any moral, it would seem to be that the man who refuses to translate his thought into deed is as great a criminal, or, at most, possesses as little power of salvation within himself, as he who will not undo his own deed when it is wicked.

Moreover, this play stands alone in the fact that it quite touches the very limits of the Drama itself. For the essence of the Drama is to portray some form of action; but here that form is non-action; hence the plan of the play, and the necessity for those external circumstances which were detailed in a previous section; for they must be external, since the character is essentially passive. This work is thus the culmination of Shakespeare's poetical activity, and exhibits the broadest range of his genius. The rest of his dramas depict collisions of various kinds, but it is the nature of the collision to be between higher and lower forms of Will. But here he quite sweeps the whole field of the Will, and makes it one of the colliding principles. He thus produces the most comprehensive of all dramas, and seems to exhaust the very possibilities of Dramatic Art.

COMEDY, OR MEDIATED DRAMA.

THE NATURE OF COMEDY.

I. TRANSITION FROM TRAGEDY TO COMEDY. — It has been already pointed out that the peculiarity of the tragic character is the intensity with which it seizes and carries out its purpose — an intensity only overcome by death. But is there no Mediation? Must the struggle of principles, and, indeed, of valid principles, end in destruction to man? Must that upon which reposes his rational existence overwhelm him in ruin? Such questions have all one object — a Mediation which saves the individual; they are the earnest inquiries of the soul after a plan of salvation. Even Tragedy ends in reconciliation; it brings back harmony to the Ethical World, but a harmony through death. Its solution, therefore, is negative — nay, self-destructive; for the object of the Ethical World must be to save man, in the highest sense. Can there not be, then, a reconciliation which will preserve the individual? Yes, there must be, is the answer of the modern world and of Shakespeare — the answer also of Christianity in its Divine Mediator.

Hence we are brought to consider that character which, being involved in a possible tragic collision, is saved before the final stroke of destruction. He has already fallen into guilt, or, at least, into conflict with Ethical principles; though, on the other hand, he may have grounds of justifi-

cation. It was noticed that the tragic conflict may be double—both internal and external; in like manner the Mediation of such a conflict has to be double. Hence the character must, in the first place, yield—must surrender his attitude of inveterate hostility. Stricken with the guilt of his conduct, he must repent—that is, make his deed undone. Repentance is, therefore, the great internal process of Mediation. When the individual sees what he has assailed, he sinks into deep contrition; this sorrow of the soul prepares him for a reconciliation with the Ethical World. Then come the external instrumentalities of Mediation, which, in Shakespeare, are of great variety, and the character is restored to all that he had lost. Chiefly, however, he is placed once more in outer harmony with institutions, or with the whole Ethical World, which is thus without strife, and the individual is saved. Such is the positive end of the Mediated Drama, which, in its supreme manifestation, is to be ranked highest in Dramatic Art.

Such a characterization as that which has been described is not tragic; nor, on the other hand, can it be called comic, in any ordinary sense of the word. It has almost a tragic seriousness; there is nothing in it which is provocative of mirth, but the end of the conflict is not death. Gradually the earnestness relaxes until the sober tinge passes into pure comedy. The moment the individual is not ready to die for his principle, the intensity of his character is gone, and begins to shade off into something quite opposite. His own fancies and absurd caprices begin to control him, and he turns to a comic personage. So there is every grade of character, from tragic earnestness down to wild hilarity, belonging to this dramatic class.

Hence the Mediated Drama has a happy termination, and herein stands in direct contrast to Tragedy. It, therefore, constitutes a special division, which is sometimes named Comedy—which word thus is used in two quite different significations. It may mean the serious, even somber, play—which, however, avoids the tragic end; or, on the other hand, it may mean the light, sportive play, resting entirely on subjective caprices, foibles, and oddities. Yet both kinds belong to the Mediated Drama, and, hence, must ultimately be classed together. Both kinds also employ quite the same species of instrumentalities for their mediation, as Natural Resemblance, Disguise, Mistaken Identity in its various forms—the nature of all which will be discussed hereafter. Comedy, however, since it is a relaxation from tragic severity, has always a tendency to descend till it reaches the laugh; it gravitates, naturally, to the humorous or ridiculous phase of persons and things. From this side chiefly it has, therefore, to be considered.

II. THOUGHT AND STRUCTURE OF COMEDY.—The Tragic and the Comic fade into each other by almost insensible gradations, and the greatest beauty of a poetical work often consists in the harmonious blending of these two elements. Not only in the same drama may both exist in perfect unison, but even in the same character. Great actors generally have a similar quality, and frequently it is hard to tell whether their impersonations be more humorous or more pathetic. This happy transfusion and interchange of tragic and comic coloring is one of the characteristics of supreme Art; it brings the relief along with the pain; it furnishes the reconciliation along with the conflict. Shakespeare seems to have taken a special delight in its employment. No principle of his procedure

is better known or more fully appreciated. His tragedies never fail of having their comic interludes; his comedies have, in nearly every case, a serious thread, and sometimes a background with a tragic outlook. Life is not all gloom or all delight; the cloud will obscure the sun, but the sun will illumine the cloud—at least around the edges.

Still, the Comic is not the Tragic, however subtle may be their intertwining, and however rapid their interaction. They rest upon diverse, and in some respects opposite, principles. Criticism must seek to explain the difference between them for the understanding, and must not rest content with a vague appeal to the feeling of beauty. Tragic earnestness springs from the deep ethical principle which animates the individual. He, however, assails another ethical principle, and thereby falls into guilt. The tragic character, moreover, must have such strength and intensity of will that it can never surrender its purpose. A reconciliation is impossible; death alone can solve the conflict. In Comedy also there is a collision with some ethical principle on the part of the individual; he intends a violation, but does not realize his intention; he is foiled through external deception, or breaks down through internal weakness; to him is wanting that complete absorption in some great purpose which is the peculiar quality of the tragic hero. The common realm of Tragedy and Comedy, therefore, is the ethical world and its collision. Their essential difference lies in the different relation of the leading characters to this ethical world.

Here we are brought face to face with the first point which must be settled—what constitutes the Comic Individual? But a single person does not make a comedy;

it requires several who are in action and counter-action; hence the second part of the subject will be the Comic Action; thirdly, a termination must be made which springs necessarily from the preceding elements; this gives the Comic Solution. Each division will be taken up in its natural order.

1. *The Comic Individual.* — He is, in one form or another, the victim of deception. He fights a shadow of his own mind, or pursues an external appearance; his end is a nullity, his plan an absurdity; he is always deceived; he really is not doing that which he seems to be doing. His object may be a reasonable one, his purpose may be a lofty one, but he is inadequate to its fulfillment; the delusion is that he believes in his own ability to accomplish what he wills. His object also may be an absurd one; he pursues it, however, with the same resolution. It may be called a foible, a folly, a frailty — still the essential characteristic is that the individual is pursuing an appearance, and thus is the victim of deception, though he may even be conscious of the absurd and delusive nature of his end.

The two limitations of this sphere are to be carefully noticed. The Comic Individual must not succeed in violating the ethical principles which he conflicts with; these are the highest, the most serious, interests of man, and cannot even be endangered without exciting an apprehension, which destroys every comic tendency. Successful seduction, adultery, treason — in fine, the violations of State and Family — are not comic; nor is villainy, which attains its purpose. Such an intention of wrong-doing may exist, but it must never come to realization; it must not only be thwarted, but also punished. The delusion, therefore,

ought not to go so far as to produce a violation of ethical principles. Nor, on the other hand, ought it to transgress the limits of sanity — a madman is not a comic character. Reason must be present in the individual, though his end be absurd. A rational man acting irrationally is the incongruity which calls forth the laugh — is the contradiction upon which Comedy reposes. There must be, in the end, a restoration from delusion, and often a punishment, both of which are precluded by the notion of insanity. Many readers feel that Don Quixote is too much of a lunatic. In general, therefore, the Comic Individual must not be a criminal, nor must he be a madman.

We are now to take a glance at the instrumentalities of Comedy — at the means which renders the Individual comic. His deceptions can arise from two sources — from the senses and from the mind. It thus may have an external cause, namely, the situation in which he is placed; or it may have an internal origin, namely, his caprice, his imagination, his understanding. Here we have the two essential kinds of Comedy — that of Situation and that of Character. The former seeks its instrumentalities outside of the individual; he is determined by them externally; hence freedom almost disappears in this form of the drama. But, in Comedy of Character, the Individual is self-determined; his situation, in its essential points, is the consequence of his own action — of his own folly or weakness; he is not plunged into it from without, by fate or by accident. In this sphere the Individual will find a realm of freedom.

In Comedy of Situation, therefore, a person is placed in circumstances over which he has little or no control, and is made to pursue absurd and nugatory objects without any direct fault of his own. His deception is brought

about through the senses ; his mistakes arise from false appearances which hover around him—in general, that which is phantom seems reality. He now follows up his delusions as ends ; he meets and collides with others who have similar ends, or with others who have rational ends. The result is an infinite complication of mistakes and deceptions, which is the peculiar nature of Comedy of Situation, or, as is more commonly called from its intricacy, Comedy of Intrigue.

The special forms of this sensuous deception ought also to be classified. In the first place, *things* may be disguised. The natural and artificial objects which ordinarily surround a man may be so changed that he imagines himself a different person, or in a strange world ; sudden transition into a new country, or into a new condition of life, may be made to appear actual, though wholly unreal. Christopher Sly, the drunken tinker, who, being suddenly surrounded by the luxury of a palace, comes to consider himself a lord, is an example. But this phase is quite subsidiary—it is a mere setting for other and greater effects.

The second, and chief, instrumentality of Comedy of Situation is the mistake in personality, or, as it is sometimes called, Mistaken Identity. One person is taken for another ; thus two persons lose their relations to the society around them, and this society loses its relation to them. The effect is wonderful. The whole world seems to be converted into a dream—into fairy-land ; the natural order of things is turned upside down ; the ordinary mediations of life are perverted or destroyed. A man with a strong head, it is true, may preserve his equilibrium in the confusion ; such an one, however, is not a comic character.

You go upon the street; you are taken for somebody else; are familiarly addressed by persons whom you have never before seen, and about matters of which you have never before heard; presents are given you; payment is demanded of you for unknown articles; you are met by a woman who calls herself your wife, and, when you indignantly repudiate her, the law is invoked; you are dragged before a court of justice, where her claim is successfully established by many witnesses, and, finally, you are in danger of being lynched by an angry populace. The other person for whom you are taken has also corresponding difficulties; his relations in life are thrown into serious confusion; his business is crossed; his dear wife seems to have gone astray; still, the disturbing influence is to him a total mystery. Society, too, is drawn into the same whirl of delusion. Law, Family, State—the highest institutions of man—become the wild sport of accident. Such a condition of things cannot last long, but, while it does last, there is fun for those who are in the secret. What is the matter? Mistaken Identity, which, however, the parties caught in the complication must not think of, else the spell is broken.

The mistakes of identity are produced mainly in two ways—by Natural Resemblance and by Disguise. The first is an accident, and lies outside of the knowledge of the individuals who happen to be like one another. They are, therefore, the unconscious victims of an external influence; they are involved in a confusion of which nobody knows the origin. But Disguise is intentional—at least on the part of one person, namely, he who has disguised himself. All the other characters of the play may be victimized by the mask, and take the appearance for

the reality; or a part of them may be in the secret, and enjoy the sport with the audience. One individual, however, is not deceived—is free; has a conscious purpose of his own, which he is realizing. Disguise has a thousand shapes; it is the most common artifice, not merely of Comedy, but of the Drama generally. It may run through a whole play and constitute the main point of interest, or it may be employed for a subordinate object in a single scene. Its manifold forms show the originality of the writer of Comedy. Here is his province—the creation of novel disguises and situations. They all, however, have the one common characteristic—deception through a false appearance.

But Disguise has its limits, which will be manifested often beneath the most adroit concealment. The person in mask is usually supposed to be the master of the complications which he weaves around himself, and so he is ordinarily portrayed. But an unsuspected resemblance may come in and disturb his plans. Thus Viola, in *Twelfth Night*, notwithstanding her disguise, is lost in the comic labyrinth by the appearance of her brother, whom she supposed to be drowned. But the true dissolution of Disguise is manifest when character reveals itself beneath the mask, and the internal nature of man shows itself stronger than any external covering. Then the Disguise becomes nothing—it quite disappears. Rosalind, in *As You Like It*, betrays herself when she faints at the story of the bloody handkerchief; both her sex and her love shine out beneath her doublet and hose. The disguised mother at a masquerade will be apt to manifest some peculiar interest in her daughter, and thus reveal both herself and the daughter. The same may be said of many other relations of life.

This has a supreme comic effect; it is the climax of Comedy of Situation, and, at the same time, the transition into a deeper principle. The external Disguise has melted away before the internal Character.

It will thus be seen that Comedy of Situation is logically incomplete, and is inadequate to express the more profound comic elements of human nature. Moreover, it is wanting in freedom. That man should be represented as placed in a world of deception and appearance, which cajoles him and leads him astray without any fault on his part, does not satisfy reason or true æsthetic feeling. Mistakes through sensuous delusion may be very laughable, but they lack the highest comic principle. We all think that a person ought not to be responsible for that which is external and accidental. Such is sometimes the reality, however, though by no means the deepest and truest reality of human existence. Man must be reached by his own act; he must himself be the cause of his own difficulties. Thus he is moved from within, is self-determined, and is to blame for his follies. Anything short of freedom will not completely satisfy us; it conflicts too strongly with our rational nature.

From these observations it will easily be inferred that, in Comedy of Situation, there can be but little portraiture of character. A person may be caught in a train of ludicrous circumstances, be his disposition what it may. A man's hat blows off on a windy day; is followed by his wig; he runs to pick them out of the mud. He is, no doubt, a laughable object to the by-standers, but such an occurrence is not determined by his character, nor designates it in any way. His behavior under the trying ordeal may reveal certain traits; still, this is not inherent in the situa-

tion, but points beyond, namely, to the inner nature of the man.

Thus we arrive at the necessity of the second grand division of Comedy, as manifested in the Individual. From its essential principle it will be best named Comedy of Character. Now, the Individual has truly an absurd end; his deed is internal in its origin; it springs from himself, and cannot be laid to his surroundings. His purpose is still a delusive appearance, which, however, is the product of his own brain. He may even be aware of its insubstantial nature, and yet pursue it; or, he may not be aware of that fact. Here rise up at once, before us the two leading phases of Comedy and Character — the Involuntary and the Voluntary.

In the first of these spheres the Individual loses sight of his true relations to the external world, to other individuals, to society. This delusion is not brought about through any disguise of what is real, but through his own folly or infatuation; it does not result from any external deception, but from self-deception. The objects and persons around him have not been changed; the disguise has now gone into his mind — has become internal, and casts its shadow upon his judgment. The mistake, therefore, is not of the senses, but rather of the understanding. This phase of comic development is thus seen to be quite different from Comedy of Situation, though the latter ultimately may reach the judgment through sensuous deception. A servant, forgetting his place, falls in love with his mistress of noble blood — like Malvolio; a stupid clown seeks the hand of a beautiful and wealthy heiress — like Aguecheek. The ethereal, poetic Titania, Queen of fairy-land, becomes infatuated with the gross, prosaic Bottom,

fool of fools. All these persons have lost their true relation in the world, and are in pursuit of their own subjective delusions, which, after making them dupes, vanish into nothing. Their purposes break to pieces in the very act of realization. Here are to be reckoned the comic effects of love requited and unrequited, the characters absorbed by a single passion — as avarice or jealousy — odd people, whimsical people, monomaniacs — indeed, most of the delineations of Comic Literature. Still; the limitation before mentioned must not be forgotten, which is liable to be transgressed just at this point. The individual must not be portrayed as devoid of sanity, even in his wildest delusions; otherwise, responsibility ceases — we think his acts are not his own; pity takes the place of merriment. The contradiction which excites the laugh is that the deed be irrational, but the doer rational; both elements must be present.

These absurd ends are pursued in earnest; the character is not usually conscious of their nature. Still, he ought to know better; his conduct deserves to be punished with shouts of laughter. But he may be quite aware of the ridiculousness of what he is doing, and nevertheless do it, and do it seriously. It is possible to be indifferent to the jeers of the world; or, a man may be driven by a passion which is stronger than the fear of ridicule. In this case, however, the result is almost the same as if the comic quality of the act were not known to him. In fact, there is almost every shade from a naive unconsciousness to complete consciousness. With the latter stage a new realm begins to make its appearance.

It is manifest that, in the phase just considered, the Comic Individual has not yet attained perfect freedom — he

is still ignorant of a certain element of the nature of his deed ; or, he is forced to do what he knows to be ridiculous in order to accomplish his deeper purpose. There is a chasm between his will and his action which is not yet bridged over. Now comes the last and highest development of Comedy—the Comic Individual is not only conscious, but voluntary. He pursues his delusion, knowing that it is a delusion, and because it is a delusion. His purpose is absurd ; he intends it to be absurd, and enjoys its absurdity. His delight is in his own tricks and follies ; he makes a comedy for his own amusement. The tinge of seriousness in the character now disappears ; the earnest pursuit of a false appearance or delusion has been left behind forever. He performs his own play and is his own audience at the same time ; he knows and wills himself to be deceived, and then he steps back, as it were, and laughs at himself, as a spectator would do. Who can assail him ? He is complete, for he takes into himself all sides ; he is free, for he realizes everything which lies in his intention, and his deed has nothing in it which is alien to what he purposes. Here is the climax of Comic Art ; only the greatest geniuses have been able to reach such an elevation. The nicest balance must be maintained ; the least swerving to the right or to the left causes a rapid descent into lower regions.

But the highest point is the termination ; Comedy can go no further. Its very excellence pushes it beyond its limits, and into dissolution. When the Individual becomes conscious that his action is absurd and contradictory, every effort of the mind is usually directed to getting rid of the contradiction. That rational man can be consciously and purposely irrational, is the supreme absurd-

ity, and, hence, this is just the absurdity upon which the supreme comic character reposes. But the logical process cannot stop at such a fine point of transition. When a person has sense enough to find out that he has no sense, he is already quite sensible. A famous sage of antiquity may be cited. The great saying of Socrates was that, while previous philosophers thought they knew something, but did not know anything, he knew that he knew nothing. This he justly considered to be quite an advance upon former wisdom. To be conscious of our ignorance is much better than to be simply ignorant; such a consciousness already goes far towards lifting us beyond the assault of folly. At this point, therefore, the comic form begins to dissolve; men will no longer pursue a delusive purpose when they become aware of its true nature.

Let us now recapitulate the various principles which have been elaborated. Comedy exhibits the external or internal deception of the Individual, who, however, must not proceed in his delusion to a serious ethical violation, nor transgress the limits of sanity. To bring about his deception there are two instrumentalities — Situation and Character. The first lies in the senses, the second in the mind. Furthermore, Situation has two elements — the relation of the Comic Individual to the physical world on the one hand, and his relation to the persons therein on the other hand; both these relations become false appearances through Natural Resemblance and Intentional Disguise. Comedy of Character has also two main forms — the Involuntary and the Voluntary; the former exhibits man as the unwilling, and for the most part unconscious, victim of some whim, delusion, contradiction; while the latter shows a similar conduct as proceeding from conscious volition.

The relation of the Comic Individual to his audience is also worthy of mention. In the pure Comedy of Situation the audience is always presupposed, and must fully comprehend the nature and cause of the deception ; it thus stands entirely above the persons in the play, to whom the matter is of the most serious import. The laugh belongs to the man who is not caught in the dilemma. There is thus between the hearer and actor a chasm which gradually becomes smaller, as we approach Comedy of Character, till, finally, it is wholly filled up and smoothed away in the highest form of the latter. For the Voluntary Comic Individual knows and laughs at his own absurdities — he is both actor and spectator. He has reached the serene height of the happy gods, which can be disturbed by nothing from without. Here is seen the true plastic element of Comedy, as far as such a term can be applied to this realm of Art.

2. *The Comic Action.* — This has the essential elements of every dramatic action, which may be analyzed into the Thread, the Movement, the Collision. The Comic Individual is driven to act by his delusion ; he has an end which he is seeking to realize. He does not usually stand alone, but is surrounded by his instruments, his friends, his enemies, as in real life ; there are connected with him a number of persons who have to perform for him certain mediations.¹ This constitutes the *Thread*. There is, generally, the one central figure around which the others gather, and which is the bearer of the leading principle ; the rest may aid, or also may thwart, the main purpose. Often characters pass from one Thread to another in the course of the play. Shakespeare has never less than two of these Threads, often three, and, sometimes, a nice analysis might find more. But there is a proper limit which ought

not to be exceeded. There must be neither too few nor too many Threads, and there must be neither too few nor too many characters in a Thread. The genuine dramatic instinct will avoid dearth on the one hand, and undue complexity on the other.

These Threads — or groups, as they may also be called — stand in mutual relation ; they run alongside of one another ; they also have some common principle of harmony, of contrast, of opposition. They move together through one phase of the action — this is called a *Movement* of the play. Then there follows a transition into a new stage, which must be directly evolved from that which goes before. These transitions are the great joints of the work, and are to be carefully noted. Such is the Movement — binding together all the Threads, and sweeping forward into a new phase of the play. The comparison may be made with a river which rolls onward as a whole, with all its parallel currents, eddies, and counter-currents, while it passes from one country into another. Of these Movements every drama written by Shakespeare has two or three, but hardly more. The critic may here be reminded of his duty. He should state in a general form the essential principle of each Movement, point out its limits, and show the ground for the transition into the next Movement.

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Comic Individual pursues his delusion, and thus he may become involved in a conflict with the institutions of the world—as Family, State, Church; or may disregard the moral elements of society—as Honesty, Truthfulness, temperate Gratification of the senses. The latter are, however, subjective traits of character rather than real ethical principles, which are always the basis of institutions, and from which the genuine dramatic collision springs. The Family is, perhaps, the most common sphere of the comic conflict, particularly on the side of sexual love. The maiden has a suitor to whom the father objects; the old man must be tricked by some disguise or deception, and the happy lovers are united at the end of the play. This is, perhaps, Shakespeare's favorite theme—the right of choice against the will of the parent. But Law, Religion, Business—all the social relations of life, may become entangled in the delusion of Comedy. A complete classification of the possible dramatic collisions cannot be given here; it belongs to the Introduction, where there is also a fuller discussion of Threads and Movements.

3. *The Solution.*—This means that the appearance be dissolved and the reality be restored. That which has caused the delusion in the Comic Individual must vanish, because it is not actual—is untruth. Since the action rests upon some deception, internal or external, this deception must be discovered and brought home to each character; thus the source of the mistakes and complications becomes known. The Solution, however, will vary according to the instrumentality employed. In the case of Natural Resemblance, the persons who are alike are at last brought together, and the similarity which has caused so much trouble is detected. Everybody then can account

for the mysterious occurrences which have just transpired. In the case of Disguise, since the whole entanglement rests in the mask, this is torn off and the plotter is caught, or, at least, is revealed. Here, too, a touch of retribution may enter for the deception practiced by the contriver. It is satisfactory to see that disguises are not without danger.

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But Comedy inflicts not punishments merely; it has also a system of rewards. For instance, in the sphere of the Family, true love usually finds its recompense, and recip-

rocal love must inevitably unite its votaries after the struggle. Note the requited affection in a play; against it rises the conflict, but it is always successful in the end. This constitutes the happy conclusion so necessary to a comedy. The like recompense must be shown in the other departments of human action. The same general principle lies at the basis of both reward and punishment—the deed must return upon the doer. To this end, full time is to be given for the natural and complete development, both of the Situation and the Character; hence the Solution cannot be precipitated at any moment, but only when it is forced by the logical necessity of the action, and cannot longer be withheld.

The Comic Solution, therefore, ends in the destruction, not of the Individual, but of his deception. He is restored to his senses, and the world is freed of its contradiction; thus all is as it was before. The comic character cannot perish, for it violates no substantial principle, no ethical institution. Herein it differs from the tragic hero on the one hand, and from the villain on the other. The former is both a violator and supporter of the right in the same deed. Guilt results and is followed by death yet he is not without justification. But the villain is purely a violator without logical motive; his fate cannot properly be dignified with the name of Tragedy; nor is he a comic character, since Comedy will not allow any ethical element to be destroyed. In fact, the mere villain, without relief, approaches the realm of the Ugly, and begins to transcend the limits of Art. In this sense of the word it may be questioned whether any such character is to be found in the works of Shakespeare. The outcome of Comedy, therefore, is mainly the dissolution of the whims, absurdities, and delusions of the rational individual.

The main distinctions which have been above elaborated also rest upon differences of nationality, and, indeed, of race. The Comedy of Situation belongs to Southern Europe, to Spain, Italy, and France—to the Romanic peoples generally. Among them it arose and flourished, and from them it was borrowed by the North. It exhibits a people with a cultivated reflection, with a subtle appreciation for every intricate action, with a fine feeling for beauty of situation and theatrical effect. But it also shows a people whose consciousness has not yet deepened into the full thought of Freedom—a people still entangled in the meshes of a formal externality, still resting in a life of the senses, still believing in a modified form of Fate. Hence man is always portrayed as either the hapless victim or the wanton sport of external circumstances. But Comedy of Character alone can fully satisfy Northern peoples, or the Teutonic race. Its fundamental principle, through all its vagaries and contradictions, is still Freedom—the internal determination of man, and, hence, responsibility for his conduct. It cannot blame, or heartily laugh at, a person for what he cannot help, but it does hold him accountable for his deed. Hence it demands a character which is moved through itself, and not from without. For this reason Shakespeare has been adopted by Teutonic peoples as their representative poet, while to the Romanic race he is still a foreigner.

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that Shakespeare has not this Southern element, or could even dispense with its employment. On the contrary, it is absolutely necessary to the Drama, which must have both circumstance and movement. Comedy of Character cannot do without Situation, though the latter is the subordinate element—is, as it were, the skeleton beneath, which supports

the living body. But Situation becomes less prominent as the comic work of Art reaches its highest sphere; it is reduced to a means for manifesting and upholding the characterization. Shakespeare himself drew nearly all the plots for his comedies from Southern Europe. There they were, already made and awaiting their highest utilization. Such was its contribution to his genius—by no means an insignificant contribution. Nor can we forget that Shakespeare sprang from that composite people, the English, and wrote in a language fused together from the two elements—the Romanic and Teutonic.

The development of the Pure Comedy of Shakespeare will pass through the phases which have just been explained. It will begin with a drama of mere external situation, as *Comedy of Errors*, will manifest increasing wealth and power till it reaches the greatest perfection in structure and characterization in *Twelfth Night*. Such is the order in which his pure comedies will be considered in their proper group.

III. CLASSIFICATION.—In the Mediated Drama the essential principle is the Mediation; hence by this principle it ought to be classified. Mediation, in Shakespeare, is accomplished in two distinct ways, which, however, sometimes partially intermingle—first, through the employment of the real world; second, through the introduction of an ideal world. This distinction separates all of Shakespeare's comedies, taken together, into two large classes, which may be called, respectively, *real* and *ideal*. These should be characterized a little more closely.

The play opens with a portrayal of some conflict. Society is in a state of strife and wrong, or, at least, individuals are colliding, both in support and in violation of

an ethical principle. Now the Mediation is introduced, which, in the first instance, belongs to the sphere of reality. It may come through a Portia, disguised as a lawyer, who rescues her husband's friend; it may come through the wife, who restores, by affectionate devotion, her alienated husband. The institutional conflict is healed in and by the institutional world and its representatives. There is no flight from a real to a religious or ideal world in order to restore the individual and society to a repose from struggle.

But, in the second instance, the Mediation does not take place in the realm where the conflict is, and amid the institutions which are themselves in collision. There is thus a flight from the real to the ideal world. Here the Individual must remain till, on the one hand, he is prepared for a return to society, and society, on the other hand, has freed itself from the internal struggle which compelled him to flee. Restoration then is possible, when on both sides the conflict is mediated. Such is the ideal class of comedies, the nature of which will be more fully discussed hereafter.

It will also be seen that in the Mediated Drama or Comedy there are essentially three movements, or three phases of one general movement. First there is a conflict between individuals, which also involves institutions; then comes the internal reconciliation, which may be brought about by a variety of means, according to the nature of the conflict and of the persons engaged in it; the third is the external restoration to parent, to wife, to country, to society, in a great diversity of forms.

The first class of comedies — those mediated in and through the world of reality — is still further divided into two separate groups, which, however, shade into each

other on their confines. These may be named *Tragi-Comedies* and *Pure Comedies*. This division is grounded upon the prevailing tone of the play, according as the tragic or the comic element preponderates. For a tabular view of the whole system of classification, the Introduction may be consulted.

ity, and, hence, this is just the absurdity upon which the supreme comic character reposes. But the logical process cannot stop at such a fine point of transition. When a person has sense enough to find out that he has no sense, he is already quite sensible. A famous sage of antiquity may be cited. The great saying of Socrates was that, while previous philosophers thought they knew something, but did not know anything, he knew that he knew nothing. This he justly considered to be quite an advance upon former wisdom. To be conscious of our ignorance is much better than to be simply ignorant; such a consciousness already goes far towards lifting us beyond the assault of folly. At this point, therefore, the comic form begins to dissolve; men will no longer pursue a delusive purpose when they become aware of its true nature.

Let us now recapitulate the various principles which have been elaborated. Comedy exhibits the external or internal deception of the Individual, who, however, must not proceed in his delusion to a serious ethical violation, nor transgress the limits of sanity. To bring about his deception there are two instrumentalities — Situation and Character. The first lies in the senses, the second in the mind. Furthermore, Situation has two elements — the relation of the Comic Individual to the physical world on the one hand, and his relation to the persons therein on the other hand; both these relations become false appearances through Natural Resemblance and Intentional Disguise. Comedy of Character has also two main forms — the Involuntary and the Voluntary; the former exhibits man as the unwilling, and for the most part unconscious, victim of some whim, delusion, contradiction; while the latter shows a similar conduct as proceeding from conscious volition.

The relation of the Comic Individual to his audience is also worthy of mention. In the pure Comedy of Situation the audience is always presupposed, and must fully comprehend the nature and cause of the deception; it thus stands entirely above the persons in the play, to whom the matter is of the most serious import. The laugh belongs to the man who is not caught in the dilemma. There is thus between the hearer and actor a chasm which gradually becomes smaller, as we approach Comedy of Character, till, finally, it is wholly filled up and smoothed away in the highest form of the latter. For the Voluntary Comic Individual knows and laughs at his own absurdities — he is both actor and spectator. He has reached the serene height of the happy gods, which can be disturbed by nothing from without. Here is seen the true plastic element of Comedy, as far as such a term can be applied to this realm of Art.

2. *The Comic Action.* — This has the essential elements of every dramatic action, which may be analyzed into the Thread, the Movement, the Collision. The Comic Individual is driven to act by his delusion; he has an end which he is seeking to realize. He does not usually stand alone, but is surrounded by his instruments, his friends, his enemies, as in real life; there are connected with him a number of persons who have to perform for him certain mediations.¹ This constitutes the *Thread*. There is, generally, the one central figure around which the others gather, and which is the bearer of the leading principle; the rest may aid, or also may thwart, the main purpose. Often characters pass from one Thread to another in the course of the play. Shakespeare has never less than two of these Threads, often three, and, sometimes, a nice analysis might find more. But there is a proper limit which ought

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III. GROUP.—TRAGI-COMEDIES.

Tragi-Comedy is an unfortunate word for the present purpose, but, after some search, no better one could be found. Ordinarily, it conveys the idea of a burlesque; not so here. It is intended to designate those dramas having a possible tragic collision, which, however, is mediated. There is that intensity of purpose and truth of principle which give to the characters, or to the greater part of them, a serious coloring, by which the plays are graded in the present group. Nor must it be forgotten that the mediation is through some form of the real world. Three dramas are placed in this group, the essential character and relation of which may be succinctly stated before proceeding to their special consideration.

Merchant of Venice.—Law, securing Property, threatens the life of the individual. Portia, the wife, and, hence, the representative of the Family, rescues the threatened individual, who, as friend of her husband, had indirectly brought about her marriage, concerning which she was in collision with the will of her parent. Thus there is a reciprocal mediation—each has mediated the conflict of the other. There are two threads, both of a serious tone, though with a mirthful background.

All's Well That Ends Well.—The Family is disrupted by the alienation and flight of the husband; both his internal and external restoration to it is accomplished by the devotion and skill of the wife. The subordinate thread here is comic. In both these dramas it will be

noticed that the wife is the chief instrument of mediation.

Much Ado About Nothing. — Now the conflict is in the Family before marriage. Two pairs of lovers are disrupted — the one from an internal, the other from an external, cause. The mediation corresponds — the one pair being brought together through the working of their own natures, aided by a slight trick; the other pair being restored to unity partly by the Friar (Church), and partly by stupid officials (State). Both the mediation and the different threads are about equally divided between the Serious and the Comic. The play thus forms a natural transition to the next group.

Thus these three plays gradually shade into Pure Comedy. *Merchant of Venice*, like the tragedy of *Timon*, has a conflict springing from property; but now the conflict is mediated. They all, too, have a collision of the Family, though in very different forms. The mediation also varies as to details, but employs in the three plays the same general means — Disguise.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

The mainspring of the action in *Merchant of Venice* is the contest between Antonio and Shylock. Every means culminates in this end; every incident contributes either to call forth their struggle, or to harmonize it after it has arisen. A glance at the leading events of the play will show that this is the one central point from which the entire action radiates — which organizes and vivifies the whole piece. The incidents relating to Portia, which, at the first look, seem somewhat remote from the main action, bring forth, in fact, the profoundest mediation of the drama. Bassanio loves Portia, and applies to his friend, Antonio, the wealthy merchant, for the money to carry on his courtship in a suitable style of magnificence. For magnificent it must be, since it requires such a large amount of money, and, besides, it appears already to have exhausted his own purse. In this fact we see the motive for the account of this elaborate wooing. Shakespeare has brought before us lords and princes, with grand retinues, suing for the hand of the fair Portia. To compete with these, Bassanio has to apply to the merchant for the ducats. But the merchant's ventures are all at sea; he has not the cash on hand, hence he must go to the money-lender. This brings him into contact with the Jew, and the main circumstances of the play are thereafter rapidly developed. Thus Portia was indirectly the cause of Antonio's falling into the hands of the Jew,

and, hence, the Poet makes her the instrumentality by which Antonio is released. And even the incidents of the last act, which take place after the culmination of the play, are logically necessary for the harmonization of the lesser contradictions which have been called forth by the main struggle. Every part must be rounded off with the perfection of art; no shreds are left to draggle from the edges of this well-woven garment. The Poet is like the sculptor, who finishes the finger-nail as exquisitely, in its way, as he does the face — the expression of intelligence.

The general movement of the play, therefore, lies in the conflict between the right of Property and the existence of the Individual, and in the mediation of this conflict through the Family, which owes its origin, in the present case, to that same individual whom it rescues. That is, the Family, represented by Portia, the wife, returns and saves the man who aided, by his friendship and generosity, to bring it into being. All the characters of the play, though possessing peculiarities of their own, must be seen in their relation to this fundamental theme of the work.

There are three essential movements, which may be named in order: The Conflict, the Mediation, the Return. Of the first movement there are two threads, showing, respectively, the Property-conflict and the Love-conflict, though the former is raised to the highest spiritual significance by the underlying religious element. These two threads, moreover, are interwoven in the subtlest manner; still, an analysis has to tear them asunder temporarily. In the first thread the antagonists are Antonio, the Christian, and Shylock, the Jew. Antonio is the center of a group of five friends, who, in a variety of ways, ingraft themselves upon the action; around Shylock also are to be placed

his daughter, Jessica, his clownish servant, Gobbo — both of whom are leaving him and going over to his opponents — and his friend, Tubal. The contrast between the two men in these personal relations is this: Antonio is the object of the warmest friendship, while Shylock is disrupting his own family — driving away daughter and servant. The second thread unfolds the Love-conflict, which has here three phases, represented by Portia, Jessica, and Nerissa. The second movement — the Mediation — has the same two threads — the Property-conflict is brought to a successful conclusion by Portia, disguised as a lawyer; the Love-conflict has ended in all three cases with a happy solution, namely, marriage. But both friends and lovers have been torn asunder in the performance of their various functions; hence the third movement will be the Return, which brings all to Belmont — the blissful abode of harmony.

I. 1. We may at once start with the conflict between Antonio and Shylock — the first thread of the first movement. Each of these men has a good and bad side to his character, though in different degrees. The question, therefore, arises — what do they respectively represent? What principles does each one maintain? For men, without some great motive lying at the basis of their action and giving color to their endeavor, can have no interest for us. It is the conflict of these principles, represented and carried into execution by men, that excites our sympathy, our fear, our delight. The first thing which we find much stress laid upon is that Shylock is a Jew — a circumstance which should excite our careful consideration. The Poet evidently intends to portray the Jewish character, or rather the Jewish consciousness, in one of its manifestations.

Antonio's religion is not specially dwelt upon, but he is called a Christian, which is also the faith of those around him. The Jew thus finds himself in a Christian world, acting and dealing with men of a strange race and strange morality, and with ends in life far different from his own. Hence the possibility of a conflict, both of nationalities and of moralities. The collision, therefore, which supplies the nerve of the play may be stated, in a general form, to be between Christianity and Judaism.

But mark! it is not between these religions as dogmatic systems of Theology, but as realized in the practical life of men. Antonio is a Christian — not that he goes to church and makes long prayers and daily rehearses the creed; he does none of these things as far as we know; but a general spirit of brotherhood and generosity animates all his actions, with one very striking exception; a liberality, which we may fairly call Christian, is ingrained into his very nature, and is the well-spring of his conduct in his dealings with his fellow-men. On the contrary, Shylock exhibits Judaism, as it must influence the doings of those who act according to its principle, though there is, in his portraiture, an element foreign to Judaism, which must not be forgotten. To be sure, the religious phase is brought into more prominence in his character than in Antonio's, but only for the purpose of showing the moral consequences of that system of belief. Shylock carries out in his life the faith that is in him, with the utmost logical rigor and bitterness.

And here we desire to lay stress upon an important fact. Shakespeare has nowhere, in any of his dramas, made religion, *as such*, the principal motive. This was, no doubt, intentional on his part, for no man understood the con-

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The cause of this strange preservation lies in the nature

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

The mainspring of the action in *Merchant of Venice* is the contest between Antonio and Shylock. Every means culminates in this end; every incident contributes either to call forth their struggle, or to harmonize it after it has arisen. A glance at the leading events of the play will show that this is the one central point from which the entire action radiates — which organizes and vivifies the whole piece. The incidents relating to Portia, which, at the first look, seem somewhat remote from the main action, bring forth, in fact, the profoundest mediation of the drama. Bassanio loves Portia, and applies to his friend, Antonio, the wealthy merchant, for the money to carry on his courtship in a suitable style of magnificence. For magnificent it must be, since it requires such a large amount of money, and, besides, it appears already to have exhausted his own purse. In this fact we see the motive for the account of this elaborate wooing. Shakespeare has brought before us lords and princes, with grand retinues, suing for the hand of the fair Portia. To compete with these, Bassanio has to apply to the merchant for the ducats. But the merchant's ventures are all at sea; he has not the cash on hand, hence he must go to the money-lender. This brings him into contact with the Jew, and the main circumstances of the play are thereafter rapidly developed. Thus Portia was indirectly the cause of Antonio's falling into the hands of the Jew,

and, hence, the Poet makes her the instrumentality by which Antonio is released. And even the incidents of the last act, which take place after the culmination of the play, are logically necessary for the harmonization of the lesser contradictions which have been called forth by the main struggle. Every part must be rounded off with the perfection of art; no shreds are left to draggle from the edges of this well-woven garment. The Poet is like the sculptor, who finishes the finger-nail as exquisitely, in its way, as he does the face — the expression of intelligence.

The general movement of the play, therefore, lies in the conflict between the right of Property and the existence of the Individual, and in the mediation of this conflict through the Family, which owes its origin, in the present case, to that same individual whom it rescues. That is, the Family, represented by Portia, the wife, returns and saves the man who aided, by his friendship and generosity, to bring it into being. All the characters of the play, though possessing peculiarities of their own, must be seen in their relation to this fundamental theme of the work.

There are three essential movements, which may be named in order: The Conflict, the Mediation, the Return. Of the first movement there are two threads, showing, respectively, the Property-conflict and the Love-conflict, though the former is raised to the highest spiritual significance by the underlying religious element. These two threads, moreover, are interwoven in the subtlest manner; still, an analysis has to tear them asunder temporarily. In the first thread the antagonists are Antonio, the Christian, and Shylock, the Jew. Antonio is the center of a group of five friends, who, in a variety of ways, ingraft themselves upon the action; around Shylock also are to be placed

his daughter, Jessica, his clownish servant, Gobbo — both of whom are leaving him and going over to his opponents — and his friend, Tubal. The contrast between the two men in these personal relations is this: Antonio is the object of the warmest friendship, while Shylock is disrupting his own family — driving away daughter and servant. The second thread unfolds the Love-conflict, which has here three phases, represented by Portia, Jessica, and Nerissa. The second movement — the Mediation — has the same two threads — the Property-conflict is brought to a successful conclusion by Portia, disguised as a lawyer; the Love-conflict has ended in all three cases with a happy solution, namely, marriage. But both friends and lovers have been torn asunder in the performance of their various functions; hence the third movement will be the Return, which brings all to Belmont — the blissful abode of harmony.

I. 1. We may at once start with the conflict between Antonio and Shylock — the first thread of the first movement. Each of these men has a good and bad side to his character, though in different degrees. The question, therefore, arises — what do they respectively represent? What principles does each one maintain? For then, without some great motive lying at the basis of their action and giving color to their endeavor, can have no interest for us. It is the conflict of these principles, represented and carried into execution by men, that excites our sympathy, our fear, our delight. The first thing which we find much stress laid upon is that Shylock is a Jew — a circumstance which should excite our careful consideration. The Poet evidently intends to portray the Jewish character, or rather the Jewish consciousness, in one of its manifestations.

Antonio's religion is not specially dwelt upon, but he is called a Christian, which is also the faith of those around him. The Jew thus finds himself in a Christian world, acting and dealing with men of a strange race and strange morality, and with ends in life far different from his own. Hence the possibility of a conflict, both of nationalities and of moralities. The collision, therefore, which supplies the nerve of the play may be stated, in a general form, to be between Christianity and Judaism.

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of the Jewish faith; it is not for all men, but for the peculiar people of God. Hence it is not a religion of propagandism, and thus avoids any struggle with dominant systems. Still, it maintains its individuality, and has a tenacity which can spring only from the profoundest conviction — or rather, in its most stubborn forms, from a complete limitation of Intelligence, beyond which the Hebrew mind refuses to pass. Thus we see renewed, though in a different way, the contest which took place 1800 years ago, on the plains of Judea — the contest which forms, perhaps, the most important period in history, and upon the result of which our entire modern civilization has turned. No wonder, then, that this play has been so popular, and has said so much to mankind, when the content of the modern world, and the momentous struggle for its existence, loom up in the background. We cannot help noting again what permanent and universal themes the Poet seizes upon as materials for his all-comprehensive genius; for here it is the collision between two of the greatest world-historical epochs — between the old and new dispensation — which lays the imperishable foundation of the play.

But this statement of the collision between Judaism and Christianity is still too abstract, and, hence, we next ask — what is the content of these two systems of religion, especially in their influence upon the practical life of mankind? What objects do these two men place before themselves, to be attained by their living? In other words, what is their end in life? This gives the central point — the germinal unit — from which all action springs. Antonio is a merchant, but it is plain that his end in life is not money, nor can it be any Christian's. Antonio's purse is open to all

his friends. He is the center of a jolly crowd of good fellows, though he himself is inclined to be melancholy. In such a position we can easily see it is not difficult to get rid of money. A deeper phase of his moral nature is his hatred of usury. He has relieved many a poor victim from the clutches of Shylock, and has denounced the meanness and cruelty of the latter, on the Rialto, with extremest vehemence. He realizes, in the highest sense of the expression, that man is above property — that is enough to show his Christianity. Money is to him only a means — a means of enjoyment for himself and friends on the one hand, and for helping his fellow-mortals on the other. On this side of his character Antonio is truly merciful; he is the practical embodiment of the holy declaration — “without charity I am nothing.” Christianity always insists upon the neighbor, who has the same rights as yourself; he is a person as well as yourself, in the thought of universal Reason, or, as Holy Writ saith, “in the sight of God.” Nay, more; its cardinal doctrine is Mercy — which means that man, within certain limits, is to be shielded from the consequences of his deeds. Man is a finite being — God made him so — and, in so far as he is finite, he cannot be held responsible for the results of his actions. He is ignorant, and, hence, liable to err; Mercy says that he shall not suffer for his mistakes. But he is also weak, and, hence, liable to transgress; Mercy says that he must receive pardon if the transgression be repented of. Here the conflict arises. Justice demands rigid accountability; it asserts that man must be responsible for all his acts, while Mercy tries to shield even the crouching criminal. These reflections, which may seem a little irrelevant, develop the motive for the most cele-

brated speech in the play, where Portia divinely discourses of Mercy :

“ The quality of Mercy is not strained ;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,
Upon the place beneath ; it is twice bless'd ;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown ;
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But Mercy is above this scepter'd sway ;
It is enthroned in the heart of kings,
It is an attribute of God himself ;
And earthly power doth then show likest God,
When Mercy seasons Justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though Justice be thy plea, consider this —
That in the course of Justice none of us
Should see salvation ; we do pray for Mercy ;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of Mercy.”

The allusion is plainly to the Lord's ~~prayer~~ — the very heart of Christianity. Thus the Poet states directly the conflict between the two religions, and gives the content of the Christian faith in a way that he alone can.

Antonio's mishap was, no doubt, his own fault ; he had no business to give such a bond, one thinks, since it seems that his credit was good in Venice, and he might have obtained the money by other means. But his case deserves the commiseration of his fellow-mortals, especially since he made a mistake merely, and did not even commit a transgression. Besides, he probably could not think, with his consciousness, that even the Jew would proceed to such extreme measures. But here we must state the side on which Antonio's character breaks down ; though generally merciful, he was unmerciful to the Jew,

and thus sinned against his own principle. His harsh treatment of Shylock was nothing less than a moral violation, hence he is not without guilt. Yet his guilt is not of the degree which involves death, hence he is saved.

Shylock's Judaism is strongly emphasized; and Judaism, in its narrow, sectarian manifestation, knows no Mercy — at least, Mercy in its universal sense. God has his own peculiar people; the world is for them, and the fullness thereof. Furthermore, the manifestation of God's favor is prosperity; of his wrath, adversity. Hence Shylock well states his end in life to be — Thrift. The acquisition of gain is the highest object of existence; every other end is subordinate. Put a man in the world with this notion: "I am the favorite of the Almighty; the rest of mankind is only so much material to make money out of, which I can use as I please," and you have Shylock. It is curious to observe how the Poet paints him as penetrated with the morality of the Old Testament. He tells the story of Jacob's deceiving Laban, as scriptural proof that his end was justifiable:

"This was the way to thrive, and he (Jacob) was blest;
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not."

Note that only one exception is made — no stealing; everything else is allowable. The reason is manifest. Theft would annihilate property, and, with the destruction of it, his end also must perish, for that end itself is Property. Hence his motto is: Thrift, but no Theft.

But now we are to consider the second element in the character of Shylock — an element which springs, not from his religion, but from his circumstances. Shylock represents the ancient Hebrew, with his essential peculiarities,

cast into the modern world and subjected to abuse and injustice on account of his faith. He is, therefore, the product of two influences—first, the original Jewish character; second, that character in a strange land, persecuted and outlawed by society. On every side he meets with scorn and outrage; hence the bitterness which overflows his whole existence, and poisons, not merely his social relations, but his own domestic hearth. Thrust into a Christian world, he must hate it on account of its attitude toward him, since it represents for him ridicule and oppression. Here the modern reader is touched with a sympathetic feeling for Shylock, and is not averse to hating along with him. In our own time and country these social and legal barriers of mediæval Europe do not exist, and no one thinks of distinguishing, in any public relation, the Jews from the common body of citizens. It is a cruel use of the Poet's great creation to call the Jews of the present day Shylocks, for to them certainly belongs a full share of the culture, public spirit, and liberality of the modern world.

But there is another contrast between Antonio and Shylock. The scene of this drama is laid in the greatest commercial city of that age, and it represents the business world. Hence it portrays man in his commercial relations to his fellow-man, and these transactions furnish the basis of a business morality. We hear the buzz of the exchange; we observe the leading question of a mercantile community—"what's the news on the Rialto?" We note with astonishment this center of information and commercial enterprise, for the ventures and the credit of Antonio are all well known to Shylock through this medium. This is, no doubt, one of the great elements of

the popularity of this play, for the chief portion of mankind must always be employed in the production and exchange of the fruits of the earth. Thus it appeals directly to business men, and is a picture of the business world. Furthermore, this is a world of free activity, for each one chooses what branch of business best suits his inclination and character. The calling thus becomes, to a certain degree, an index of the moral disposition of the man. It is well known that some kinds of business, though acknowledged by law and recognized by the community as necessary, are, nevertheless, held in disrepute by the great majority of mankind.

What callings, then, have these two men respectively chosen? Antonio is a merchant; he exchanges the productions of the world; he knits the nations together by mutual traffic — of course, for a consideration. But there is nothing narrow or mean in his nature; his end, as before stated, is not money, and this frees him from any trace of avarice or illiberality. In fact, his melancholy seems to arise in part from a dissatisfaction with his calling; it cannot satisfy the highest wants of man. Shylock, on the contrary, is a usurer; he takes advantage of the sudden wants of people to extort their earnings. Hence this class of men were regarded as the enemies of society, ready to draw profit out of any misfortune to the Individual or the State. It is not surprising, then, that this business fell into the hands of the Jews, who were persecuted by society, and, hence, hostile, or at least indifferent, to it. We shall not now dwell upon that equally unreasonable prejudice against all interest on money, which seems to be shared also by Shakespeare. The use of money ought to be worth something as well as the use of anything else. Our

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age has recognized this fact for the most part, though there still remain upon our statute books some traces of the old spirit, as, for example, the limitation of the rate of interest. The consequence, however, is that, in our time, the banker has taken the place of the usurer, and money has its price like any other commodity. The bank is now the handmaid of all commercial activity, and supports, instead of sapping, the enterprise of the country. But it is no wonder that formerly the merchant hated the usurer, for the merchant-prince who carries on a world-commerce is exposed to many unforeseen contingencies—the storm, the rock, the pirate—and sometimes *must* borrow. Hence Antonio's hatred of the Jew lies also in their callings.

2. Such is the first thread of the first movement, portraying the mercantile, but, above all, the spiritual, conflict between Antonio and Shylock. Let us now take up the second thread—the Love-conflict—in which Portia is the main figure, supported, however, by Nerissa and Jessica. Portia is the third great character of the play, and in importance stands quite on a par with Antonio and Shylock. Her function is mediatorial; in fact, she may be called the grand mediatrix of the entire drama. In her we see the instrumentality by which the main results are brought about. Through her courtship with Bassanio, Antonio comes into the power of the Jew by means of the loan. At her house all the personages of the play assemble, and the wooing is done. Moreover, she accomplishes the rescue of Antonio, which is the main mediation of the poem. The great principle of which she is the bearer may be termed the Right of Subjectivity. She asserts the validity of the Internal and Spiritual against the crushing

might of externality ; but she does not deny the Right of the Objective in its true limitation. Only when this Objective becomes destructive of its end, and self-contradictory, as in the case when the Law was about to murder Antonio, does she place a limit to it, and invoke a higher principle. Her struggle is with legality and prescription asserting themselves in spheres where they do not belong ; but, in relations where this contradiction no longer appears, she is the most ethical of women. In the Family her subordination is complete—indeed, devout. We shall see that all her acts have one end and one impelling motive—devotion to her husband, an absolute unity with his feelings and interests ; in other words, subordination to the Family. She vindicates the Right of Subjectivity for herself in order that she may obtain the one whom she really loves—without which principle, it need hardly be said, the true existence of the Family is impossible. So peculiar is this character, so difficult is it to ascertain its unity, and so important is its place in the drama, that we shall be justified in looking somewhat minutely at all the circumstances in which it has been placed by the Poet.

First comes the long array of suitors, among whom were to be seen the nobility from every part of Europe—nay, even from Africa. The motive for this elaborate display, as we have before intimated, was to show the necessity of Bassanio's borrowing large sums of money to compete with these nobles, and also to exhibit Portia in all her dignity and splendor. But Portia has quite disregarded the outward glitter of wealth and rank, and has seemingly sought out a follower in the retinue of a lord, instead of the lord himself—"a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in the company of the Marquis

of Montferrat." So, at the outset, we see that she cares naught for the External, but lays stress upon the Internal. The Poet has thus given us an inkling of her inclination that we may not be in the dark about her choice. Moreover, we already know of the inclination of Bassanio from the very first scene of the play, and he, too, is aware of Portia's preference for himself. This point, then, let us carefully bear in mind — that the Poet has already let us into the secret, unknown to the outside world, that Portia and Bassanio love one another, and that each one knows of the other's love. The two people, therefore, belong together; they alone can form a rational union, since they possess the absolute prerequisite of the Family, namely, reciprocal love.

Under ordinary circumstances nothing would remain but that the happy pair should go to the nearest church and, in common parlance, have the knot tied. But to this blissful consummation there is a great obstacle. Portia's father is dead, and has left a will which seems to bind her choice of a husband to a hopeless accident. Three caskets — made of gold, silver, and lead, respectively — are to be set before his daughter's suitors for selection, and that casket which contains her image carries with it her hand in marriage. Hence we find her lamenting, in almost her first words, that she cannot choose whom she would, nor refuse whom she disliked. But she recognizes the binding validity of the last request of her parent, and thus we have one of Shakespeare's favorite collisions, which may be stated as the Right of Choice against the Will of the Parent. Both sides have their validity, and it is just this validity of both sides which makes it a genuine collision. None will deny the right of the parent over the

child, and this right was less circumscribed in former times than at present. But, though the parent may no longer have any legal right, he has still the right of respect; and no child with a truly ethical feeling, such as Portia undoubtedly possessed, would withhold obedience.

Such is the one side. But the other side is what we have termed the Right of Choice, or, in general terms, the Right of Subjectivity. This demands that the daughter should have, absolutely, the right of selecting her partner for life. She has to bear the responsibility of her choice, for she must live with the one whom she selects. The husband and wife constitute that unity called the Family; it is a unity of emotion; each party finds true life in the other. This emotion, by which both are melted together into one common existence, is called love. So, if we have a true unity, or a true Family, love is the indispensable condition. Now, it is just this important element which the will of Portia's father flings to the winds by exposing the choice of her husband to mere accident. It does not demand reciprocal love, which is the only basis of rational marriage. Such is the problem which Portia has to solve, and such is the mental conflict which we find her undergoing. Let us, then, carefully observe how she manages the matter.

All the suitors have taken their departure except two (not including Bassanio), who are more determined or less punctilious than the rest. The causes of this withdrawal are not given, but may be easily imagined. We may suppose they were men of honor, and would refuse to acquire a wife by lot—to take the hand without the heart. Portia, too, may have shown, in an unmistakable manner, her dislikes, or, finally, they may have found the last con-

dition too hard, viz. : That they must swear never to woo another woman. Whatever the reason may have been, they all vanish after they had served the Poet's purpose. But those who remain demand to have the caskets placed before them. The first one who goes through with the process of selection is the Prince of Morocco, who chooses by the outside appearance, and seems to rest his claim upon physical courage. He takes the golden casket, whose glitter typifies the brilliant exterior. Of course, such a choice is directly antagonistic to the character of Portia, and it is logically impossible that he can become her husband. The second one, the Prince of Arragon, chooses only to a certain extent by the outside, since he takes the silver casket — and he rests his claims upon merit. Now, merit is a most excellent thing, but we all know that it can never supply the place of love. It is no uncommon occurrence that the more deserving are passed by and the less worthy are chosen — and who will say that it is not justifiable? Both Princes fail. Why? Because they lack the subjective element — love; at least, the love of Portia. For, as before stated, in order to form a true basis of the family relation, love must be reciprocal — each one must feel and find his or her own harmonious existence in the other. Rank, wealth, courage, and merit are much in their places, but they can never be substituted for affection. Thus we see that the rejection of these suitors was not a mere fortuitous circumstance, but a logical necessity of the play.

Such is the conflict of Portia with the will of her parent, which exposes her family life wholly to the sway of accident. The two conflicts of the first movement have now been unfolded. Both go back to the same fundamental

idea—the Objective, in the form of prescription and legality, threatens to crush the Right of Subjectivity. Now we are ready to behold the mediation of both collisions through Portia.

II. 1. This is the second movement of the play, of which the first thread takes up again the conflict between Shylock and Antonio, and shows its solution. Shylock, being a Jew, can use the Gentiles for his own end; that end being Thrift, he uses them for making money. This is allowed by the law of Moses, which permits the Hebrews to take usury from the stranger, but not from the brother. But Antonio stands in his way. He has the right to employ any means of getting rid of the hateful merchant which does not endanger his own safety; for, if he should lose his life in the attempt, that would not be thrifty. The means most consistent with his own safety is the formal side of the Law—he is going to murder Antonio legally. Now, Law expresses the Right of the Person in reference to Property; its main *dictum*, even at the present time, is, “Property is sacred;” and the Jurisprudence of Venice was still more rigid in this respect than that of the present day. Hence the Right of Property comes into conflict with the existence of the Individual. This is illustrated by the well-known example of a starving man stealing a loaf of bread. Is he justified in doing so, or not? We see the contradiction—the right to a loaf of bread on the one hand, against a human life on the other. All of us would say, in such a case, Property is the lower, and must be subordinated when it conflicts with humanity. Mercy overrides Justice. But the Jew must remain deaf to such considerations, for his highest end is Property. How, then, can he acknowledge a higher?

But Shylock's ground of right is still more devoid of a content than the case just mentioned, for he can get back his Property trebled. No; his bond calls for a pound of flesh—that, and nothing else, will satisfy him. Thus the collision is narrowed down to a mere empty form of Law against the existence of an individual. Law is pushed in this way to the extreme limit of self-contradiction, for Law, which was made to protect and preserve mankind, has now become the direct instrument of their destruction. Is not that self-contradictory? But it is the Law, and the Law must have its course, says Portia; only, Mercy can soften its severity and annul its wrong. Hence her appeal for Mercy which we have already quoted. But the Jew cannot relent; the character would be utterly illogical and untrue if he did. The letter of the Law, then, is to be followed with the utmost rigidity; this is the Jew's own basis. "But hold!" says Portia, "the bond mentions no blood." If you want the letter, you can have it to your heart's content. Portia abandons her first defense—that of Mercy—and takes the weapons of the Jew and turns them against him. This contradiction rests upon the fact that a law, a bond, a contract—yea, language itself—cannot describe the Particular, for they are in their nature general. We all know how cumbersome legal formulas are; with what wearisome detail they try to describe a title, a piece of land, or a testamentary act. It results from this circumstance. Hence, if an absolute adherence to the letter is insisted upon, neither Shylock's nor any other bond is possible.

Many lawyers have made objection to this point taken by Portia; they say that no court in Christendom would have decided that a pound of flesh did not include the

blood, though the bond may not have expressly said so. This may be the case, but it does not affect the truth of Shakespeare's representation. His design was to show how formal Law contradicts itself, and to exhibit the Jew beaten at his own game. From this moment Shylock subsides; he sees the point, and is completely overwhelmed. The might of the Form of Law was never more powerfully presented. The judge, the people, and justice itself, are all on the side of one innocent man, yet they are unable to rescue him from the clutches of an odious wretch who has the form alone on his side. Still, the Poet must find for us some reconciliation with the Law; it would be most ridiculously inadequate if it did not furnish some means for reaching the Jew. This it does, inasmuch as it is made to seize the crime of Shylock just in its truly vulnerable point—criminal intention. This is Portia's next point against him. He has willed the death of a citizen, of which the punishment is confiscation and death. We have seen this motive lying behind all his actions, notwithstanding his vociferation for Right and Justice.

Still, we must not suppose that he was a common villain—an Iago, or Richard, or Edmund. The subjective side was little emphasized by the Jewish faith. If men conformed to Law and Religion, it mattered little about motives. Under the old dispensation, the man who committed the most justifiable homicide had to flee the country, and the person who ate pork had committed a deed of guilt. Hence, when Shylock is arraigned for his subjective intention, we may fairly assume that this principle lies beyond his consciousness; it is the product of the modern world and Christianity. Still, Shylock is saved,

because he is ready to yield to formal Law when that turns against him; hence the Law cannot well destroy him. This characteristic is the direct antithesis of the modern spirit, whose tendency is rather to break down formal Law—to sacrifice it to the Individual. Shylock, however, is punished with a truly poetic justice. Avarice loses its money; religious and national bigotry sees the Jewish house of Shylock go down forever, by the marriage of the daughter with a Christian. Moreover, the court and Portia could not reasonably condemn the Jew after they had maintained the cause of Mercy with such persistency and power. It would be a flagrant inconsistency to demand that for Antonio which they the next moment refuse to Shylock.

It is not the design of Shakespeare to make the Law contemptible, but to exhibit its limitation. Even the old Romans recognized this limitation—although theirs was essentially the law-giving consciousness—in the well-known maxim: *Summum jus, summa injuria*. But it has been left to modern Jurisprudence to recognize and embody its own finitude within itself—in other words, to establish a system of Mercy. The pardoning power is lodged in the Executive by Law; thus the highest officer of the State, out of his own heart, out of his own infinite subjectivity, reverses the legal decision, and, hence, is by Law above Law. The Judge has to administer the formal Law, even in its injustice, and, therefore, he often, after giving a condemnatory sentence, turns around and signs a paper recommending executive clemency. But the Jurisprudence of Venice seems not to have yet recognized this distinction. It was a commercial state; its prosperity depended greatly upon the security of Prop-

erty, hence the inflexibility of its Law. For the Right of Property was deemed of almost paramount importance; hence its Law cannot save Antonio, though it can condemn Shylock.

But what if the Jew would still insist upon taking his pound of flesh? Then he must have it, and the play becomes a tragedy. Antonio loses his life by the letter of the Law, and Shylock is executed for murder. But the play cannot admit of this solution; for thus the character of the Jew would be wholly untrue, as we have before stated. Nor can the Poet allow Antonio to perish for a mere mistake. This would be totally adverse to his moral code. Hence the difficulty demands mediation, and the conclusion must be happy. The piece is, therefore, neither a tragedy nor a comedy, but a middle species of play, which may be called, for want of a better word, a mediated drama or tragi-comedy.

Shylock ranks as one of the most perfect characterizations in Shakespeare. How complete in every respect! How vividly does he rise up before us! Not merely his physical appearance, but his entire spiritual nature, stand forth in the plainest lineaments. In fact, we feel as if we know him better than we could possibly have done in real life. The Poet has laid open the most hidden recesses of character, has portrayed him in the most diverse relations, with a truth and fullness unapproached and unapproachable. We ask ourselves—whence this completeness, this richness, this concreteness, of characterization? If we wish to see the infinite difference upon the same subjects, compare Shylock with the best efforts of other dramatists. Take *L'Avare*, by Molière. Placed by the side of Shylock, how meager and unsatisfactory? Can

we get at the ground of this extraordinary superiority? First, we should say that Shylock is something more than mere avarice; he has a deeper motive in his nature, and his greed for gain is only one of its manifestations. It is true that his end in life is Thrift, as before stated, but that end is the offspring of his moral and spiritual being — of his religion. Everything goes back to this center. Shylock is a Jew — one of the “peculiar people.” In all his actions this deepest principle of his faith and his consciousness wells out; given the motive, he marches logically to its consequences. Thus we have arrived at an absolute spiritual unity in the man. The second reason for the transcendent excellence of this characterization is the breadth which it exhibits. The activities of Shylock embrace quite the totality of Life. We see him in his family, in business, in civil relations, in social relations, in morality, in religion. We behold him brought into contact with every essential form of society; and he acts in them, brings his principle to the test through them. Nor is he plunged into them from the outside, but is brought into living relation with them. Hence the concreteness, the perfection, the complete individualization, of character. But it is different with *L'Avare*. How limited is the range of the piece in this respect! Harpagon almost descends to the common miser — cut off from the world, in obscurity, dirt, and rags — holding fast to his money-bags. His niggardliness in his household, his tyranny in his family, and an example of his extortionate usury, express quite all that we see of him. This is not Shylock — who is exhibited in many more, and also far more important, relations — who sees the world and grapples with it in all its essential forms; this is what gives content

and concreteness to his character. Hence the Harpagon of Molière is empty — almost like an abstract personification of avarice; in fact, it is a meager caricature, compared with the Shylock of Shakespeare. But it gives occasion to many laughable incidents and situations; this was what Molière wanted; he sought for predicaments more than for characters.

2. The second thread is Portia's, whose conflict has been already unfolded, and must now be shown in its mediation. Her work is double — she has first to solve her own difficulty, then Antonio's. After the failure of the two Princes, Bassanio appears, in order to make trial of the caskets. He has both the requisite elements — loves and is loved; for the Poet has carefully told us all this beforehand. We have no doubt of his success from the start. It is curious to trace the ethereal, almost imperceptible, influences which the Poet brings to bear upon Bassanio to determine his choice. First, his state of mind, all aglow with affection — no wonder that he disregards the exterior of things, for love is blind. Then Portia, in the same condition, and giving expression to it in words, to which we may add, in imagination, her looks. Finally, the music, and the vague hints of the song, until the feeling of internality is intensified to such a degree as to be irresistible. The very air seems to whisper in the ear of Bassanio, "take the leaden casket," since it is the negation of all outside show and glitter. In it he finds the picture of Portia — a most fitting symbol of the internal nature of the characters of both Bassanio and Portia, as well as of their relation to one another — the image of the loved one imprinted on the heart. The same principle which causes the rejection of the two Princes must bring about the triumph of Bassanio.

The grounds of a rational marriage are now complete. Portia and Bassanio have all the elements of a true union. Such is, undoubtedly, the logic of the situation. Thus the choice of caskets—which seemed to represent a horrible Chance about to crush out the rights of human nature—is spiritualized into the highest forms of freedom. Portia wins, and, moreover, wins through the very instruments which threatened her happiness; she converts them to weapons for her own rescue. The choice exhibits the ends and motives of the chooser, and, in so far as these are finite and fall short of the Rational, failure results. In this sphere, namely, the unity which forms the basis of the marriage relation, the Rational is the Right of Subjectivity.

But does Portia really give any hint to Bassanio which of the caskets to choose? It will be recollected that it was forbidden her in her father's will to tell this secret. A suspicious circumstance is the introduction of a song during the choice of Bassanio, which the previous choosers did not have the benefit of. Hence one is inclined to scrutinize closely the meaning of this song. It is somewhat enigmatic, yet its general purport may be stated to be: "Do not choose by the eye—by the glittering outside—for it is the source of all delusion." Hence Portia, after observing with the greatest care all the formalities of her father's will, breaks it just at the point of its conflict with her subjective right. This is done so delicately by her that it is scarcely perceived; still, it is none the less real. Thus she stands here as the grand bearer of the Right of Subjectivity, in its special form of Love versus Obedience, to the will of the parent.

We have already, several times, called attention to the fact that Shakespeare has been very careful to show the

mutual affection of both parties. These were the two that belonged together, and were bound to come together in spite of all obstacles. The two Princes exhibit various phases of conflict with this principle of love, which was finally to triumph. Otherwise, the poem would be irrational, which, in Art, is the Ugly. Here we may note a distinction between Shakespeare and an inferior poet. The latter, instead of hedging Chance on all sides, and making it the lowest possible factor, would have given it full scope; for he seeks dramatic effects by surprise. Shakespeare, on the contrary, always prepares — never surprises. He elaborates the motives and ends, and marches to their logical conclusion. We feel that so it is, and cannot be otherwise; the process has all the rigid necessity of Reason. But the novelist or playwright seeks to produce a “sensation” through unexpected turns and incidents. The true Artist, however, aims to have every action, and especially every crisis, properly *motived* — to use a German expression — and to banish accident altogether.

So ends the first part of Portia’s career — she has solved the problem of marriage. Now a wholly new field awaits her. Up to this point (towards the end of the Third Act) the drama has produced three happy pairs of lovers — Portia and Bassanio, Nerissa and Gratiano, Jessica and Lorenzo — who are all brought together in the pleasant halls of Belmont, Portia’s country-seat. But those very means which caused this blissful union have, in another direction, called forth a terrific collision. Suddenly, upon this tender scene, there lights the demon of ill news; word comes to Bassanio that his dearest friend, Antonio, to whom he owes all his present happiness, is in imminent danger of being sacrificed by the Jew. It falls like a thunderbolt in their

midst, and scatters the company in every direction. Leaving Lorenzo and Jessica behind, they all quit Belmont at once, animated with one purpose — to rescue Antonio. Bassanio goes direct to his friend; Portia hits upon an indirect mode of procedure — she goes to Venice disguised as a lawyer. The main point to be noticed is that Portia succeeds — Bassanio does not. This is specially emphasized by the Poet. Bassanio, with all his money — or, rather, her money — fails, while Portia is the chosen mediatrix. With what skill she fulfilled her mission has been shown in the previous thread. It will be recollected that the collision which she is now called upon to mediate is there stated to be between Formal Law and what may be termed the Right of Mercy. Now, it is essentially the same struggle through which Portia has just passed; she had been able to master the difficulty and assert her principle. Having thus gone through the fire herself, and knowing the frequent injustice of formal authority, she now sallies forth in defense of injured innocence. It is true that her father's will was enforced by prescription rather than by law; but it is the same principle, fundamentally, and in both cases Portia steps forth as the champion of the Right of Subjectivity. It is confessed that Antonio is wholly guiltless of any crime. He has not even willed, much less committed, any wrong deserving of death; yet he is about to be sacrificed on the altar of legality. She comes, therefore, to cut the toils of the law when they have entangled an impulsive, though innocent, victim. It will thus be seen that she has been educated to meet just this crisis by her own experience.

But, however well fitted for the task she may be, there must be some motive to impel her forth. It has already

been stated that, in the external course of the drama, Portia was the primal cause, or rather occasion, of Antonio's falling into the hands of the Jew. Bassanio needs money to carry on his courtship; he applies to his friend Antonio, who resorts to the Jew, and thus becomes his victim. Hence it is not at all out of place that she should become the instrument to make good the evil which she had unwittingly done. But, when it is added that this same man was the dearest friend of her husband, and the chief means of her obtaining the one whom she loved, the motive for her must be all-powerful. Portia is a truly ethical character — she is one with her husband in feeling and interest. Her whole struggle hitherto has been in order that she might make a rational marriage, by uniting with the man of her heart. Anything, therefore, which affects him profoundly must affect her in an equal degree, as she is an organic member of that unity called Family. Now, Bassanio is so deeply attached to Antonio that he would even sacrifice his hard-won wife to effect the rescue of his friend. It is this sympathy — this oneness of feeling with her husband, which impels her to undertake the difficult enterprise. The pang which thrills his heart must pierce hers; the impulse which drives him forth cannot leave her behind. That woman expressed unconsciously the deepest principle of her nature who said to her sick husband: "My dear, I have a pain in your breast."

But why should the mediatorial character be sustained by a woman? In this respect also the Poet is true to human nature. For it is just the subjective side of mind which is prominent in woman, and distinguishes her from man — who lays much more stress upon the validity of the

objective world. So strong is this tendency in him that he is apt to disregard the other element. Hence we see, in the trial scene, that the judge and citizens are all on the side of Antonio, yet they quail before that objective reality called Law. By no means let it be understood that these remarks are directed against Law; on the contrary, it is the greatest conservative power of humanity. But it has its limitations, and these we are insisting upon. Nor will it be denied that woman is the fittest person to plead for Mercy, since it tallies so thoroughly with her subjective, emotional nature. So appropriate is all this, that we feel that Portia never unsexes herself, nor even manifests any of the unlovely traits of strong-mindedness, though her adventures may well strike terror into any imitators.

Now, what is the secret of this characterization? Shakespeare has made Portia assume the most hazardous disguises, and perform the boldest acts — acts from which any woman might well shrink; and yet we feel that she is always womanly — nay, the most womanly of women. The great majority of Shakespeare's prominent female characters have one trait, however varied they may otherwise be — subordination to the Family. It is a devotion to husband, parent, child, lover; they live but for one object — to be absorbed into the existence of another. By themselves they feel that they are nothing; only in the unity of feeling, interest, and existence with another do they have any happiness in life. The complete absorption of the individual through emotion, not consciously, but instinctively, is the grand characteristic which Shakespeare gives to his women — that is, to those whom he wishes to portray as good, noble, and dutiful. On the

contrary, his bad women are, for the most part, marked by quite the opposite of this quality. Such are the limits in which Shakespeare's female characters move. Now, that just this trait forms the charm of woman few men will deny. Though wit, fancy, learning, may call forth admiration, there must be something quite different to subdue. It is not servitude, but the willing subordination to the higher end — self-sacrifice in its most exalted form. We believe that it is this consideration which makes us ever respect Portia; her motive is pure devotion to her husband, complete oneness with his interests and friendships, added, no doubt, to gratitude toward that man — Antonio — who has been chiefly instrumental in making her the happiest of mortals. For Antonio is a stranger to her so far as we know; why should she assume the disguise, and run the risk of an ignominious exposure and tarnished reputation? No; she has that complete harmony and unity with her husband, that his joys are her joys, his sorrows her sorrows; and she has the same interest in her husband's friend that the husband himself has. Thus she is a truly ethical character — ethical in the sense that she instinctively subordinates herself to the highest end of woman.

Such is the motive which impels Portia forth to the rescue of Antonio. Just here occurs the seeming contradiction in her character. Hitherto she has asserted boldly and strongly her individual rights; she has trampled upon custom, and even Law, when they have stood in the way of her purposes. But, the moment she is united with Bassanio, all is changed. She yields up her whole being to another, who is, of course, equally devoted to her; this daring and resolute will is now at peace, and

submissive; and her expression of subordination is as absolute as language can make it:

— "Though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself . . .
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted; but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen of myself, and even now — but now
This house, these servants, and this same myself
Are yours, my lord."

Now, what is the solution of these contradictory traits? *Portia insists upon the subjective principle only in order that her union with her husband may be more complete.* She has struggled for the Right of Choice. To what end? Since the oneness of the marriage-tie is based upon emotion, she insists that emotion in this sphere must have absolute validity. Every hindrance must be set aside; the more intense and unobstructed the affection, the more perfect the bond of unity. Thus she has asserted her individuality, with the single purpose that her subordination might, in the end, be more complete, and that her marriage might be truer and more rational.

A great many persons are inclined to rebel at this sudden swallowing up of individuality, and, at the first glance, it does seem a hard destiny. Yet it will require but little examination of the actual world to discover that all true living is coupled with just such abnegation of self — indeed, that life would otherwise be impossible. Goethe, in his

later writings, has often laid much stress upon the Renunciation of the Individual; and the great poets, philosophers, and moralists, in their own different ways, have repeated the same lesson. To live for a universal end is not merely desirable, but necessary, and forms the basis of moral action. All organization, society, state, demand the subordination of particular ends, motives, and desires; otherwise, institutions of every kind would be quite impossible. The truth is the individual would perish through his own self-contradiction were he not subsumed. So the family organism requires the same renunciation from man and woman; both must sacrifice their self-will, and submit themselves to the higher end. In fact, love is the emotional, and, hence, unconscious and unwilled, cancellation of the individual; it means that a person finds his whole happiness — indeed, even his existence — not in himself, but in another. It is from these considerations that we perceive Portia's character to be a harmonious Whole, springing from one central thought, and true in the profoundest sense to human nature. Portia thus stands as the ~~type of the~~ rational woman — rational in what she resists and in what she accepts, rational in rebellion and in submission. She is a strong character, yet not strong-minded, in the special sense of this term; she withers not, like a delicate flower, at the first rude blast, but maintains her individual right, till to yield becomes duty.

The remaining characters need not be long dwelt upon. Bassanio is made worthy of Portia by his devotion to his friend, and she perceives him to be a true man. He is even ready to sacrifice his new bride on the altar of friendship, through which alone he has gained her. Bassanio is

the means by which Antonio has come into difficulty. Bassanio's prosperity has been Antonio's adversity, but he is willing to forego it all for the sake of the friend to whom his good luck is owing. Thus his devotion is complete; every shade of selfishness is stripped off, and we behold the worthy husband of Portia. Gratiano and Nerissa serve chiefly as mirrors for the leading characters—to reflect motives, thoughts, and sentiments. They have little distinct individuality, yet are very necessary to show other persons. Nerissa does little but exhibit her mistress, and the same function is performed for Antonio by Solanio and Solarino.

One of the under-currents of the play, which, however, soon mingles with the main stream, is the story of Jessica, the daughter of the Jew. Here again we have the assertion of the Right of Choice against the Will of the Parent—the same collision as Portia's. But it is in a wholly different soil and atmosphere, and, hence, the fruit is different. Portia respects all the formalities of her deceased father's testament; Jessica tramples without scruple upon all the commands and prejudices of a living father, and steals his money besides. Portia's father was said to have been wise and just. We know the character of Shylock, and what his daughter's education must have been; hence the great difference in the moral character of the two children. The same collision occurs in the clown, Gobbo, but in a form so low, so devoid of content, that it becomes ridiculous—in fact, a burlesque. It appears here as duty to a master who starves and abuses, against the right of running away. Gobbo succeeds, after a subtle piece of argumentation, in reconciling his conscience with his desire, and then takes to his heels. Thus in Portia, Jes-

sica, and Gobbo, there is seen a gradation of the same collision.

III. The Fourth Act terminates the leading collision of the play — that between Shylock and Antonio. The one has been punished, the other rescued. Why, then, is the Fifth Act added? It is because the minor complications, which are brought about by the leading collision and form a necessary element of it, are not yet solved. Portia and Bassanio have been violently separated — like Gratiano and Nerissa — by the main struggle. When this is at an end, there is no longer cause for separation; but they must quickly rebound to their former union, which is their only rational existence. Hence the Return, which is the theme of the Fifth Act, is a logical movement of the whole drama. If there be mediation, it must be complete in every part.

Moreover, Bassanio and Gratiano are as yet ignorant of the share their wives have had in accomplishing the great mediatorial act. To be sure, we — the audience or the reader — know all about the matter, but it is certainly not our duty to supply the missing elements of a work of Art. If such were the case, the greatness of the poem would depend upon the greatness of the hearer or reader — that is, his ability to make it perfect. In short, a drama, or any work of Art, must be complete in itself — an Objective Whole, not dependent upon anybody to supply its omissions — and the characters must be intelligible, not merely to us, but to one another.

Hence the ~~Fifth~~ Act may be called the Return. The characters pass out of the realm of difference and contradiction into the world of harmony. It opens with an idyllic strain, which at once ushers us into the nature of the place — we are now in the land of love. Lorenzo and

Jessica, in responsive song, celebrate the heroes and heroines of romantic devotion. Next the sweet strains of music arise—the language of emotion and harmony. So there is diffused over the whole scene the atmosphere of love and concord. Finally, the parties return separately from their struggle, into the land of harmony; the rescued Antonio is also there—the mark of triumph. The difficulty about the rings is only temporary; their hearts are right, and that is the main thing; for it would ill become Portia, after her crusade against the most weighty formalities of the world, to insist upon the formality of a ring. Even the ships return to smooth over the last trouble; and the concord is perfect when the story of the disguise is told. It is worth noticing that Shakespeare has here localized his themes. The abode of quiet is at a distance from the place of strife; so Belmont is the land of Harmony and Love, which they leave in the hour of struggle, and to which they come back in the hour of peace. This may be a violation of that critical canon which demands Unity of Place, but it is a rule which Shakespeare very often follows, and which it would not be difficult to justify.

To aid the readers who may desire to grasp these results in the more difficult, yet more precise, forms of philosophical statement, the following summary is given: The collision is between Antonio and Shylock, and is mediated by Portia. Its logical basis is the contradiction between the Objective as realized in the institutions of Reason, and the Subjective as the individual side of man. The former undertakes to crush the latter, through which alone it had existence, for it is posited by the Subjective; hence it becomes contradictory of itself, and is negated. The Subjective, since it is not universal, is, in its turn, a new self-

contradiction, and, hence, a negation of itself—which results in its subsuming itself under the Objective. So Portia asserts the Right of Subjectivity only to end in subordinating herself to one of the forms of objective reality—the Family.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

In this play the comic element has not yet come to be paramount; it is the earnest side of the action, which constitutes the larger and more important portion. The divisions should now be called the serious and comic threads; whereas, in Pure Comedy, they are named the high and low comic threads. Therefore the contrast is different, and, indeed, more profound; the sober and the sportive phases of life are brought together, instead of two distinct sportive phases. Nor is the solid ground of reality abandoned—that is, no ideal realm is introduced in order to solve the conflict. Still, it has the essential form of the Special or Mediated Drama, in which a disruption of family or society is healed and a restoration takes place, ending in the union of the separated members. On the whole, the coloring is rather somber, and, at times, unpleasant, though not without many light hues playing around the picture.

The action lies in the Family, and after marriage. The husband is forced to marry against his will; thus one element of true union is wanting, namely, reciprocated affection. The wife alone possesses the emotional element at the beginning. The course of the drama will show how she succeeds in winning the love of her spouse, and thus placing the Family on its true foundation. The woman is here seen pursuing the object which, for her, is the highest and most worthy; the domestic institution is

her supreme end. It is her pertinacity and her devotion which rescue and secure the endangered bond. The ethical movement is, therefore, from a marriage resting on unrequited affection to a marriage resting on requited affection; it is the man who is wanting in the proper emotion, and it is the woman who not only possesses it herself, but also excites it in the bosom of her husband.

Thus the theme is beautiful and noble, but its treatment will not be deemed satisfactory by everybody. Helena, for so the heroine is called, seems to be too much of a husband-seeker to be agreeable to her own sex—who demand, in theory at least, that the man do the wooing. Still, after being married, she pursues her truest object—the reconciliation of her husband. But that which gives the greatest offense is the means which she employs to effect her purpose. She is, in the highest degree, a will-character; she is determined to carry out her purpose; no ordinary punctillo can stop her. Still, it must not be forgotten that her end is no mere individual whim, but the supreme end of female nature, namely, the true existence of the Family. But this phase of the work will be more adequately discussed at a later stage of the essay.

The action naturally falls into three main movements. The first portrays the love of Helena for Bertram—who does not requite it—and their forced marriage; for the King commands, and the mother favors, the match; but Bertram, under the advice of his evil genius, Parolles, refuses to submit. The second movement shows the separation of the pair, through the flight of Bertram and his impossible conditions of union; but Helena fulfills the conditions with success on the one hand, and on the other hand Bertram discovers and gets rid of his evil

submissive; and her expression of subordination is as absolute as language can make it:

— "Though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself . . .
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted; but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen of myself, and even now — but now
This house, these servants, and this same myself
Are yours, my lord."

Now, what is the solution of these contradictory traits? *Portia insists upon the subjective principle only in order that her union with her husband may be more complete.* She has struggled for the Right of Choice. To what end? Since the oneness of the marriage-tie is based upon emotion, she insists that emotion in this sphere must have absolute validity. Every hindrance must be set aside; the more intense and unobstructed the affection, the more perfect the bond of unity. Thus she has asserted her individuality, with the single purpose that her subordination might, in the end, be more complete, and that her marriage might be truer and more rational.

A great many persons are inclined to rebel at this sudden swallowing up of individuality, and, at the first glance, it does seem a hard destiny. Yet it will require but little examination of the actual world to discover that all true living is coupled with just such abnegation of self — indeed, that life would otherwise be impossible. Goethe, in his

later writings, has often laid much stress upon the Renunciation of the Individual; and the great poets, philosophers, and moralists, in their own different ways, have repeated the same lesson. To live for a universal end is not merely desirable, but necessary, and forms the basis of moral action. All organization, society, state, demand the subordination of particular ends, motives, and desires; otherwise, institutions of every kind would be quite impossible. The truth is the individual would perish through his own self-contradiction were he not subsumed. So the family organism requires the same renunciation from man and woman; both must sacrifice their self-will, and submit themselves to the higher end. In fact, love is the emotional, and, hence, unconscious and unwilled, cancellation of the individual; it means that a person finds his whole happiness — indeed, even his existence — not in himself, but in another. It is from these considerations that we perceive Portia's character to be a harmonious Whole, springing from one central thought, and true in the profoundest sense to human nature. Portia thus stands as the type of the rational woman — rational in what she resists and in what she accepts, rational in rebellion and in submission. She is a strong character, yet not strong-minded, in the special sense of this term; she withers not, like a delicate flower, at the first rude blast, but maintains her individual right, till to yield becomes duty.

The remaining characters need not be long dwelt upon. Bassanio is made worthy of Portia by his devotion to his friend, and she perceives him to be a true man. He is even ready to sacrifice his new bride on the altar of friendship, through which alone he has gained her. Bassanio is

the means by which Antonio has come into difficulty. Bassanio's prosperity has been Antonio's adversity, but he is willing to forego it all for the sake of the friend to whom his good luck is owing. Thus his devotion is complete; every shade of selfishness is stripped off, and we behold the worthy husband of Portia. Gratiano and Nerissa serve chiefly as mirrors for the leading characters—to reflect motives, thoughts, and sentiments. They have little distinct individuality, yet are very necessary to show other persons. Nerissa does little but exhibit her mistress, and the same function is performed for Antonio by Solanio and Solarino.

One of the under-currents of the play, which, however, soon mingles with the main stream, is the story of Jessica, the daughter of the Jew. Here again we have the assertion of the Right of Choice against the Will of the Parent—the same collision as Portia's. But it is in a wholly different soil and atmosphere, and, hence, the fruit is different. Portia respects all the formalities of her deceased father's testament; Jessica tramples without scruple upon all the commands and prejudices of a living father, and steals his money besides. Portia's father was said to have been wise and just. We know the character of Shylock, and what his daughter's education must have been; hence the great difference in the moral character of the two children. The same collision occurs in the clown, Gobbo, but in a form so low, so devoid of content, that it becomes ridiculous—in fact, a burlesque. It appears here as duty to a master who starves and abuses, against the right of running away. Gobbo succeeds, after a subtle piece of argumentation, in reconciling his conscience with his desire, and then takes to his heels. Thus in Portia, Jes-

sica, and Gobbo, there is seen a gradation of the same collision.

III. The Fourth Act terminates the leading collision of the play — that between Shylock and Antonio. The one has been punished, the other rescued. Why, then, is the Fifth Act added? It is because the minor complications, which are brought about by the leading collision and form a necessary element of it, are not yet solved. Portia and Bassanio have been violently separated — like Gratiano and Nerissa — by the main struggle. When this is at an end, there is no longer cause for separation; but they must quickly rebound to their former union, which is their only rational existence. Hence the Return, which is the theme of the Fifth Act, is a logical movement of the whole drama. If there be mediation, it must be complete in every part.

Moreover, Bassanio and Gratiano are as yet ignorant of the share their wives have had in accomplishing the great mediatorial act. To be sure, we — the audience or the reader — know all about the matter, but it is certainly not our duty to supply the missing elements of a work of Art. If such were the case, the greatness of the poem would depend upon the greatness of the hearer or reader — that is, his ability to make it perfect. In short, a drama, or any work of Art, must be complete in itself — an Objective Whole, not dependent upon anybody to supply its omissions — and the characters must be intelligible, not merely to us, but to one another.

Hence the ~~Fifth~~ Act may be called the Return. The characters pass out of the realm of difference and contradiction into the world of harmony. It opens with an idyllic strain, which at once ushers us into the nature of the place — we are now in the land of love. Lorenzo and

Jessica, in responsive song, celebrate the heroes and heroines of romantic devotion. Next the sweet strains of music arise—the language of emotion and harmony. So there is diffused over the whole scene the atmosphere of love and concord. Finally, the parties return separately from their struggle, into the land of harmony; the rescued Antonio is also there—the mark of triumph. The difficulty about the rings is only temporary; their hearts are right, and that is the main thing; for it would ill become Portia, after her crusade against the most weighty formalities of the world, to insist upon the formality of a ring. Even the ships return to smooth over the last trouble; and the concord is perfect when the story of the disguise is told. It is worth noticing that Shakespeare has here localized his themes. The abode of quiet is at a distance from the place of strife; so Belmont is the land of Harmony and Love, which they leave in the hour of struggle, and to which they come back in the hour of peace. This may be a violation of that critical canon which demands Unity of Place, but it is a rule which Shakespeare very often follows, and which it would not be difficult to justify.

To aid the readers who may desire to grasp these results in the more difficult, yet more precise, forms of philosophical statement, the following summary is given: The collision is between Antonio and Shylock, and is mediated by Portia. Its logical basis is the contradiction between the Objective as realized in the institutions of Reason, and the Subjective as the individual side of man. The former undertakes to crush the latter, through which alone it had existence, for it is posited by the Subjective; hence it becomes contradictory of itself, and is negated. The Subjective, since it is not universal, is, in its turn, a new self-

contradiction, and, hence, a negation of itself — which results in its subsuming itself under the Objective. So Portia asserts the Right of Subjectivity only to end in subordinating herself to one of the forms of objective reality — the Family.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

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genius, and thus is prepared for a return both to country and family. The third movement is the restoration, which exhibits the punishment and repentance of Bertram, and its culmination lies in the complete unity of affection of husband and wife.

I. 1. The drama is not as complex as is customary with Shakespeare. The central figure is Helena, from the beginning, and the minor threads are somewhat disjointedly developed. She employs as her instruments two leading groups; the one is at Rousillon, headed by the Countess, mother of Bertram; the other at Paris, headed by the King. Thus the two institutions—Family and State—come to her aid through their representatives. She has been brought up by the Countess of Rousillon, who has treated her as a mother treats her own child. The son of the Countess, Bertram, has also been reared in the same household; thus the two have seen each other from infancy, and, on the part of Helena, the relation has resulted in a deep and intense love. With this love the drama starts. Helena is proud of the memory of her dead father, who was an eminent physician, but his image has been crowded out of her mind by that of Bertram. The latter, however, has now gone to the French court, at Paris; this separation Helena cannot endure; she must overcome the obstacle in some way. Here we acquire the first insight into her character.

At the end of the first scene her soliloquy strikes the key-note of her conduct. She has the fullest faith in self-determination; she believes that our remedies lie in ourselves, and not in any external power—not even in heaven. Our designs fail because we ourselves are to blame. Her resolution is heroic. She almost denies that there is any-

thing impossible; it is only lack of purpose in men. Such she declares to be her conviction, and we may now expect proportionate deeds. But the special article of her faith, which is applicable to her present case, is that merit will always master love; that she can win Bertram by her desert, whatever the opposition may be:

“Impossible be strange attempts to those
That weigh their pains in sense, and do suppose
What hath been cannot be. Who ever strove
To show her merit that did miss her love?”

Here we see the female will-character more strongly manifested than it is in Portia even. It will not lack opportunities for the severest trial hereafter.

Already a problem is before her; love demands the presence of its dear object—Bertram is away. By what means can her longing eyes be brought to rest upon him again? She is ready at once with a plan—a plan, however, which intends not to be satisfied with mere vision, but which proposes to reach the full fruition of love in marriage. The King is sick with a mortal malady, as is supposed, and has been given up by his physicians. She has a prescription, left by her father, which will exactly meet the case. Off she starts for Paris, after having revealed the whole matter to her foster-mother—the good Countess—who, though doubtful of the success of the project, yields to the strong determination of Helena, and gives consent to the journey. The mother, too, exhibits no objection to the alliance of her son with the poor orphan.

Great is Helena's success at the court; she completely cures the King, who, in his gratitude, offers to her in mar-

riage the choice of any nobleman in attendance upon him. Bertram is there — her selection is, hence, easy and speedy. But he protests, his main ground of refusal being difference of rank. The King, however, answers his argument by placing merit above birth, and is ready to confer upon her a noble title; his utterances are the more effective on this head, since his descent is so much higher than Bertram's. Still, the latter is not persuaded, and says that he cannot love her, and will not strive to love her. Then the Monarch employs his authority and commands the marriage to take place. The young man apparently submits, takes the hand of his bride, and is married that night.

It will be seen that Helena has on her side both the mother and the King, who represent, respectively, the institutions of the Family and the State. The two persons of highest rank, authority, and experience agree in preferring merit to birth; they accept the poor physician's daughter as their worthy peer — the one admits her to relationship, the other to nobility. Bertram cannot well resist such powers; he can get rid of them only by flight.

Bertram is a young nobleman — a little wild, but not inherently mean or vicious. He possesses courage, and is proud of his aristocratic lineage, but is inexperienced, and is not hard to lead astray. The possibility of his appreciating Helena is never lost; there is no ingrained diabolism in his nature. That which causes him to stumble is bad company and bad advice, which are concentrated in his favorite friend and attendant, Parolles. To the worthless character of this man Bertram is at first utterly blind; and it is the second thread of the drama which exhibits the gradual unmasking of Parolles, so that even Bertram sees his real nature.

2. Parolles, therefore, should be viewed in his proper connection with the play. He is the evil principle which must be eliminated before restoration is possible. His character seems to be well understood by all except his victim. He is a liar, coward, braggart, and libertine. His first talk with Helena, in which he argues against virginity, reveals a leading trait. The scenes with old Lafeu show both his boasting and his cowardice. A punishment is in store for him, wherein his baseness and perfidy will receive their penalty, after being fully revealed. Upon the advice of such a counselor Bertram resolves to flee from France and enter the Florentine war, which was then breaking out. At home he can no longer remain, with both institutions against him. Yet he has good ground of complaint—the act of the King in forcing the marriage was arbitrary and unjust. The right of love, in his case at least, was violated, which right the Poet always vindicates for woman. His flight, therefore, has its justification, though not for any reason given by Parolles; his return must take place through his own free will.

It will be noticed that the Clown performs his usual duty of giving a comic reflection of the leading theme. He, too, wants to get married; his rude jests always pertain to the sensual side of marriage. A certain Isabel is his lady-love, whom, however, he wishes to change off after he has been to court. The Clown's part is here very slight; he is mainly a messenger, who must be joined to the group around the Countess of Rousillon.

II. 1. The second movement starts with this separation of man and wife. Bertram has gone, and in departing has imposed certain conditions upon Helena which he deems it impossible for her to fulfill. But little does he imagine

the deep cunning and strong will of her whom he rejects. She will accomplish his supposed impossibilities without his knowing it; her only way of success is to bring him, unconsciously, to fulfill his own conditions. For this purpose she slips away from her home, after leaving a written request that the Countess should induce her fugitive son to return as soon as possible. She gives out that she is going to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Jaques, and she leaves the people at home with an impression to this effect.

But her object becomes manifest when we next find her at Florence, whither young Bertram has returned, after having obtained great fame and honor in the war. Indeed, she has spied out the very means of accomplishing her purpose, and is about to set it in motion. This is the young maiden, Diana, whom "the amorous count solicits in the unlawful purpose." Bertram, under the guidance of Parolles, seems to be leading the life of a gay libertine at Florence; the snare is laid for him through this weakness—he is caught through his lust. That such an act should be done by Helena is repugnant—is the great blot on the play. Her end is a true one and a most noble one—it is to restore the disrupted relation between her husband and herself. But her instrumentality is offensive in a very strong degree, and casts a dark shade upon her character. It is true that there is no violation of chastity on her part, but she is willing to make her husband believe that there is, and thereby cause him, unconsciously, to fulfill the conditions prescribed by himself. As far as his will is concerned, it is an act of incontinence, of which she is the intentional instrument, and of which she reaps the reward. Shakespeare has made his heroines perform many deeds

of doubtful morality for the sake of love; they lie, run away from home, violate the will of parents, put on disguises, and deceive in every possible manner; but Helena outstrips them all, for she, in order to be married, is ready to destroy what seems to be almost the very foundation of marriage.

Diana and her mother are easily induced to lend their aid, when they learn that Helena is really a wife, and her object is restoration to her husband. She has, therefore, succeeded completely in this second attempt; Bertram's requirements are fulfilled, but he is as far removed from her as before, for the restoration can be complete only through the conscious purpose. But already a change has taken place in the external surroundings of Bertram, which will prepare him for an internal change, and render a new life possible. This is the discovery which he makes of his evil genius, Parolles. Here a new thread begins, which runs through the second movement, and which may now be taken up and unfolded.

2. Parolles has had his character described already; it is well known to Helena and to the Countess, who regrets his influence over her son. But it is old Lafeu who has discovered his inherent cowardice, and has the boldness to warn Bertram against trusting him too far. Still, the young Count disregards the admonition, and takes Parolles with himself to Florence, where the evil influence of such a companion is plainly indicated in the way of lustful indulgence. Bertram is, however, a man of courage; now his friend is to be shown to him as a coward. An ambush is laid for Parolles, when he pretends to return to the field for his lost drum; he is seized by some soldiers, and is deceived into believing that he is a prisoner of the

enemy. Blindfolded, he is brought into the presence of Bertram, and asked certain questions. All his mean traits are at once unmasked before the eyes of his astonished friend; his lying, treacherous, and cowardly nature is revealed beyond a doubt. This is the end of their friendship.

Bertram has now discovered and got rid of his evil genius, and largely of the evil element of his own character. For he was easily influenced, and, indeed, was the victim of bad company. His instincts were generous and honorable. But, like many young men of rank, he fell into the hands of a pander. Now his true nature is free to work itself out and exhibit its proper traits. It is noticed that the letter of his mother produced upon him a deep impression—almost changed him into another man. He has also heard of the rumor of Helena's death, of which he was the cause; he confesses that he is mourning for her. Such are the influences which are now working, unobstructed, upon his soul; no Parolles is standing in the way. The result of the second movement, therefore, is that Bertram has been unconsciously fulfilling the conditions of marriage. The first condition, which may be called the external one, is fulfilled through the device of Helena; but the second condition, which may be called the internal one, can be seen in the gradual preparation of his mind for a return of the old relations—in the softening of his hatred toward Helena into genuine affection.

III. The third movement shows a change of place, which corresponds to the spiritual change—all parties have returned home to France. Bertram appears in the presence of his mother and the King, he confesses his repentance for his deed, and obtains reconciliation. Thus

the institutional world, from which he had torn himself away, receives him back to its bosom, after he has manifested adequate contrition for the past. Also, a new alliance with the daughter of Lafeu is in process of negotiation, and it is a good sign of his mental condition that he receives coldly the proposal. But it is manifest that the restoration will be incomplete till he be restored to Helena, and find out what she has done for the sake of their union.

Bertram has already declared that her devotion and death have changed his former dislike into love; he has also expressed repentance for his harsh treatment of her. Thus it will be seen that his emotion is now, for the first time, ready for the Family. The main instrument for this purpose is again the disguised Diana, who here appears before the King demanding justice against Bertram. The upshot of the matter is that her disguise has to be revealed. The device of Helena, who now steps forth on the scene, is made known; Bertram sees that his conditions, which he deemed impossible, are fulfilled; this is, however, only a new evidence of her devotion. But it must not be forgotten that already he has declared his love—which is the true basis of their union, and not this external stratagem of which he was the unconscious victim, and which shows only the extent of her sacrifice. Thus the restoration is complete; Bertram is restored to the king, mother, wife. But the main success is that of Helena. She has not only brought back her husband, when he had fled beyond the reach of maternal and regal authority, but also she has conquered his internal nature, and brought him under the yoke of love.

This drama has clearly Shakespeare's Ethical World, not-

withstanding the stains which darken its purity. Disguise is employed, though in a subordinate manner. Helena, as a pilgrim, has to reveal herself at once in her true relation to the Widow; her substitution for Diana is a deception, not through a bodily covering, but through darkness. The tricking of Parolles is also brought about by means of a temporary disguise; herein its comic force is manifested. But the mask is employed only as a short expedient in single cases, and does not move the whole action, which lies, for the most part, in the clear daylight of plain reality. The play has, therefore, but little disguise, and no ideal realm. Both the Romanic and Teutonic elements can be discerned, though their distinction is far less marked than in other comedies. The serious and elevated portion has an Italian origin; the rest seems to belong to the Poet. The alternation of verse and prose follows, in general, the same rule. Two different styles of compositions have been detected, it is supposed, wherefrom various conclusions have been drawn by critics; but the discussion of this subject lies outside of our province.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

The gay, light-hearted pleasantry of this drama has always found special favor with readers, and is its main, though not its sole, quality. It is not so poetical as some other comedies of the Poet; the ethereal glow of imagery is supplanted by the sparkling display of witty dialogue. In like manner there is a total deficiency of ideal scenery; everything takes place on the solid ground of reality. There is no transition to a pastoral or fairy realm, where the world of the imagination soothes and reconciles the conflicts of society — where the individual torn by the struggles of actual life finds repose and ultimate restoration. The action lies wholly in the sphere of Real Comedy; there are the high group and the low group of comic characters — the one set is designated by their employment of the most lively sallies of wit; the other set by a grotesque mixture of pretension and stupidity. Then there is a ~~dark-colored~~ thread — the ~~group of villains~~, who make by no means a mirth-provoking picture. Finally, there is added the tragic element — malice assails, and for a time triumphs over, innocence; the feeling of pity rises alongside the feeling of indignation, and then both these sterner emotions are submerged in a grand overflow of merriment. It is sometimes hard to tell which element predominates — the serious or the humorous; certain it is that we hear the extreme notes of the scale of passion in very rapid succession. Most

people, however, will probably decide that the leading parts of Benedick and Beatrice, together with Dogberry and his associates, as well as the general movement of the whole play, produce a more positive comic than tragic impression. On the other hand, the sad story of the innocent maid, Hero, runs through and controls the entire dramatic action. Thus the two sides are almost equally balanced.

A glance may first be cast upon the purely external structure of the work. The household of Leonato stands in the foreground; it furnishes all the women; especially the two chief female characters are to be observed. Now comes the company of Don Pedro, which returns to this household after a short campaign against the foe; it furnishes only men, among whom are the two lovers for the young ladies. The lively tone of the play is taken from this happy meeting; the war has been successful; honor and fame have been attained; there has also followed the restoration to home and friends. It is a time when human beings may be allowed to indulge in a merry mood, when an effervescence of wild frolic cannot possibly be prevented. Later is added the group of stupid, yet well-meaning, officials, who give a new comic tinge when the action is growing too somber. These are the three external elements which make up the story. But the internal movement must be grasped differently; it has as its central points the two pairs of lovers, and a critical analysis must follow the same line on which they move.

The ethical sphere in which the drama is laid is the Family, and, indeed, that phase of the Family antecedent to marriage. Two obstacles arise, each of which produces a disruption of a sexual pair. The course of the play will

be to overcome the obstacles, and to unite the separated couples. But let us mark the difference between them. The one pair starts with a mutual defiance — with an intellectual separation; they berate one another with poignant, though witty, abuse; they go further, and assail the Family, as such, with bitter raillery. They, therefore, refuse to join the institution, and think themselves far superior to its influence; but the institution will show itself stronger than the individual, and subordinate both of them in the end. Not only will they marry, but will marry one another; such is their comic retribution. The second pair, however, have their union disrupted by an external power, over which they have no control; the breath of calumny touches the woman and destroys her character temporarily; with her a marriage is impossible under the circumstances. This part has a serious — indeed, a tragic — depth and coloring; but the difficulty is removed by the introduction of a purely comic instrumentality. To sum up the subject, there are two obstacles to union in the Family — the one is internal, in the conscious volition; the other comes from without, from an external cause. Both, however, are overcome, and the transition from separation to unity in marriage is the play.

Let us now unfold, in a general way, the clear, yet somewhat intricate, structure of the drama. The action falls into three distinct movements. The first movement exhibits a triple relation of the individual towards the Family. The first thread of it is that of Benedick and Beatrice; here is seen the conscious separation of the two sexes. The second thread is that of Hero and Claudio, together with those who are promoting the match; this starts with the unconscious unity of love, and culminates in the

declared betrothal. The third thread is that of Don John and his associates; it exhibits the means for disrupting the union in process of formation; he undermines the character of Hero, and he is the chosen instrument for destroying marriage, since he is himself illegitimate. The relation of these three groups is now manifest: One separates, the other unites, the last shows the violator of the ethical bond—that is, the villain. The second movement also portrays unity and conflict in the Family, but in a manner just opposite to that of the first movement. Here the first thread exhibits the reconciliation of Benedick and Beatrice; their mutual hostility is turned into mutual affection through a disguise which, though a disguise, reveals their own true nature to themselves. The second thread shows the union of Hero and Claudio assailed by the villainy of Don John; he first attempts to excite the jealousy of Claudio against his brother, Don Pedro, which, however, is soon counteracted. But his second effort is successful—he blasts the reputation of Hero by a false device, so that Claudio publicly disowns her, and thus their tie is disrupted. The third thread of this second movement will introduce to us the instruments of mediation, which are to vindicate innocence and bring to light the wrong-doers. They are of two very distinct kinds—the Friar, who maintains the purity of Hero, and conceals her with the certainty of future evidence to that effect; and the stupid officers of the law, who, by sheer dullness, uncover the villainy. Thus those before separated are now united in love, and those before united in love are now separated. The third movement still remains, which will expose the deception, show the repentance of Claudio for his hasty action, bring back Hero, and restore

the bond which has been torn asunder. Thus the two pairs have overcome all the obstacles, and are at last united in marriage.

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But there is a reason for his conduct and disposition — there has been committed against him a wrong whose sting has injected its poison into his whole existence, and transformed his nature. The villain, pure and simple, is a horrible monstrosity without human lineaments, and is certainly not a Shakespearian creation. Don John, therefore, has some ground for his present character; the Poet has indicated it plainly—it is to be found in his illegitimacy. The Bastard is the natural villain; he is punished for an offense which he never committed, and necessarily turns against institutions which make him an outcast and an outlaw. Above all, the Family disowns him, though it is the special function of the Family to love and cherish the child. He thus inhales the atmosphere of wrong from his birth; law — justice itself — becomes, in his case, the instrument of injustice. With vengeance he turns upon society, and especially upon the Family, which, however, cannot recognize him without its own destruction. The Bastard represents a perpetual conflict, which, in a strong nature, must become tragical; he has to obey that which destroys him, or, if he disobeys, he becomes the villain. Shakspeare has elsewhere made him the scourge of his kindred. In *King Lear* it is the father — the real author of the violation — whom he hates and destroys; here it is the brother, whom, as a member of his family, he must hate, but whom he must not destroy. It is also natural that he should

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people, however, will probably decide that the leading parts of Benedick and Beatrice, together with Dogberry and his associates, as well as the general movement of the whole play, produce a more positive comic than tragic impression. On the other hand, the sad story of the innocent maid, Hero, runs through and controls the entire dramatic action. Thus the two sides are almost equally balanced.

A glance may first be cast upon the purely external structure of the work. The household of Leonato stands in the foreground; it furnishes all the women; especially the two chief female characters are to be observed. Now comes the company of Don Pedro, which returns to this household after a short campaign against the foe; it furnishes only men, among whom are the two lovers for the young ladies. The lively tone of the play is taken from this happy meeting; the war has been successful; honor and fame have been attained; there has also followed the restoration to home and friends. It is a time when human beings may be allowed to indulge in a merry mood, when an effervescence of wild frolic cannot possibly be prevented. Later is added the group of stupid, yet well-meaning, officials, who give a new comic tinge when the action is growing too somber. These are the three external elements which make up the story. But the internal movement must be grasped differently; it has as its central points the two pairs of lovers, and a critical analysis must follow the same line on which they move.

The ethical sphere in which the drama is laid is the Family, and, indeed, that phase of the Family antecedent to marriage. Two obstacles arise, each of which produces a disruption of a sexual pair. The course of the play will

which they think they are doing. The culmination is reached when it is seen that the more they are opposed the more like each other they become — the greater the external repulsion the greater the internal attraction.

2. The second thread, which resumes the story of Hero and Claudio, is now darkened by the suspicion of disloyalty which Don John succeeds in throwing on the woman. Claudio has once more manifested his credulous, and indeed jealous, disposition; he accepted the villain's suggestion that the Prince had betrayed him in his suit for the hand of Hero, all of which turned out false; this incident is a preparation for his ready relief in Don John's accusation against her whom he loved. The Bastard now tricks the senses of both Claudio and Don Pedro. Borachio, one of his servants, is intimate with Hero's waiting-maid, who is induced to appear at the window during the night and answer to the name of her mistress. Claudio and Don Pedro are concealed near at hand; they at once conclude that the charge is true — that Hero is disloyal. It lies in the character of Claudio — who is not wicked, but flighty — to be thus duped; and the light, volatile character of the Prince is equally exposed to deception. Such are the rulers; hence delusion must be a common affair in the realm. The stupid mistakes of Dogberry and his companions exhibit a similar phase in low official life. But the comic retribution for this light-headedness is not neglected; the senseless clowns uncover the villainy which had deceived the rulers. The question arises: Which of the two classes of men is the wiser?

The serious import of this part now deepens to a tragic intensity. The ceremony of marriage is about to be performed between Hero and Claudio; they are

declared betrothal. The third thread is that of Don John and his associates; it exhibits the means for disrupting the union in process of formation; he undermines the character of Hero, and he is the chosen instrument for destroying marriage, since he is himself illegitimate. The relation of these three groups is now manifest: One separates, the other unites, the last shows the violator of the ethical bond—that is, the villain. The second movement also portrays unity and conflict in the Family, but in a manner just opposite to that of the first movement. Here the first thread exhibits the reconciliation of Benedick and Beatrice; their mutual hostility is turned into mutual affection through a disguise which, though a disguise, reveals their own true nature to themselves. The second thread shows the union of Hero and Claudio assailed by the villainy of Don John; he first attempts to excite the jealousy of Claudio against his brother, Don Pedro, which, however, is soon counteracted. But his second effort is successful—he blasts the reputation of Hero by a false device, so that Claudio publicly disowns her, and thus their tie is disrupted. The third thread of this second movement will introduce to us the instruments of mediation, which are to vindicate innocence and bring to light the wrong-doers. They are of two very distinct kinds—the Friar, who maintains the purity of Hero, and conceals her with the certainty of future evidence to that effect; and the stupid officers of the law, who, by sheer dullness, uncover the villainy. Thus those before separated are now united in love, and those before united in love are now separated. The third movement still remains, which will expose the deception, show the repentance of Claudio for his hasty action, bring back Hero, and restore

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already at the altar, in the presence of the Friar, when the stunning refusal to consummate the union is given. Claudio repudiates his betrothed on the spot, and publicly charges her with unchastity. His statement is confirmed by the Prince; and so the first condition of marriage is destroyed by assailing the purity of the woman. Hero, in accordance with her character, says but little, though she gives a firm denial to the charge; this denial, however, avails her nothing against the apparently strong evidence. Thus the two lovers are rent asunder, and their tie seems to be forever destroyed; in agony both she and her parent beg for death.

The father at first believes in the guilt of his daughter—the proof seems decisive. But it is interesting to note those who refuse to put any faith in the accusation. First comes Beatrice, then Benedick. The two whilom scoffers of love now assert the honor and fidelity of love in the person of Hero. Great, indeed, is their change, yet not unaccountable. Nay, the traducer of purity must be held to answer with his life—Beatrice forces her lover to vindicate the principle which is in him by sending a challenge to Claudio. The world for them is wholly altered, and from the witty assailants they have become the earnest defenders of the Family. It is a beautiful touch, and shows the transforming power of love; they read the honor and fidelity of Hero in their own, and have turned champions of injured purity—the very couple who formerly were in the habit of breaking their jests upon the faithlessness of man and woman.

The second defense of Hero is made by the Friar, who asserts her innocence against both accusers and parent. He is the religious man, who has spent his life in the con-

temptation of the good and holy till he feels their presence with the certainty of instinct. His calling leads him to lay greater stress upon the internal element of character than upon any external occurrence — which, he knows, may be the result of mere accident; he has far more faith in the intrinsic virtue of women than in the evidence of the senses. He is, therefore, certain that a mistake has been made somewhere; he has no proof — but his observation, his divine lore, the judgment of his ripe age, declare the innocence of Hero; above all, he feels the deep truthfulness and purity of her nature in consonance with his own. It is the religious instinct which speaks in him. The Friar, therefore, is the fit mediator of the difficulty; he is to rescue the name of Hero from obloquy, and restore the broken bond of the Family. But at this point we pass to a new principle, and to a new grouping of characters.

3. (a.) The third and last thread of the second movement will include the mediating forces, which are now set to work, and which are of two kinds. First comes the Friar, who has a scheme which, like the schemes of so many of Shakespeare's clergymen, is a deception — a pious fraud — practiced for the sake of gaining a good end. The reader may, perhaps, doubt whether such a man can be truly religious, and probably looks upon the preceding view of the character as altogether too highly colored. But it is the Poet's manner. The priest is the true mediator, who has to reconcile contradictions, conflicting principles, and hostile individuals; something has to give away, or strife will be perpetual. The scheme is to conceal Hero and spread abroad the rumor that she is dead; even the funeral ceremonies

are to be performed over her grave. That will cause remorse to her accusers, and it will even be a proof of her innocence that dishonor brings death. The worthy Friar wishes to prepare the heart of Claudio for repentance; softened by contrition, it will more willingly restore the former bond. Thus the mediator seeks, not only to vindicate the fair name of the woman, but also to bring back the former relation between the lovers. His end is seen to be of the truest and noblest, but he employs means which, though they bring happiness out of wretchedness, and reestablish a broken institution, violate the strict code of morality. But he seems unwilling to sacrifice the world to the outer semblance of truth; indeed, he would probably think that such a course itself would be the grossest violation of duty, and that adherence to a moral abstraction may sometimes become an act of immorality. The so-called Jesuitical maxim, that the means justifies the end, keeps everywhere troubling the reader of Shakespeare.

(b.) Religion has now contributed its influence for the rescue of injured innocence. The second form of mediation will be that known to the secular world, namely, justice. The State is the proper instrument for the punishment of the wrong inflicted on Hero; what is it doing to this end? But the very representatives of the State are victimized — are, in fact, the perpetrators of the outrage. The men high in power are light-headed and hasty; they have become, unintentionally it is true, the authors of the direst violation of right; their stupidity — or, at least, unfitness — is held out in glaring colors. What remains? Let the humblest officers of the law step in and accomplish what could not be done by their rulers. Dogberry and

his associates are drawn in the most decided outlines of burlesque; ignorant pomposity, confusion in language, joined to a still greater confusion of thought and clownish stupidity, are combined to produce the broadest comic effects. But they possess one supreme trait—fidelity in office; this places them above their Prince, and they discover the villainy of which he is the dupe. They overhear one of the servants of Don John conversing about his share in the diabolical plot against Hero's good name; they have really not sense enough to understand the story, but they vaguely feel that they have come upon a piece of rascality, and so at once make the arrest of the scamps. The result is that the means of discovering the roguery is placed in the hands of Leonato; but he, the wise Governor, pays no attention to the information which most nearly concerns him and his child. The rude, but faithful, officials are dismissed to make the examination of the culprits at their leisure. Such are the comic instruments here employed. The reason for their employment seems to be hinted in a reply of Borachio, the arrested servant: "What your wisdom could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light." The contrast between the high and low officers is here expressly declared. Without the authority of the Poet himself, such an explanation would probably be deemed very far-fetched, and an absurd refinement on the plan of the drama. But, when he interprets his own work, we suppose that we shall have to submit.

The second movement has now come to an end, with its two contrary tendencies. There has been a transition from an intellectual separation of the sexes to a union in emotion; there has also been a transition from a union in

emotion to an alienation ; to heal the disruption, both religious and secular forms of mediation have been introduced. If there is any lesson to be drawn from this part of the play, it is that intellect gives a more stable foundation for marriage than the sudden impulse of passion ; Benedick and Beatrice could not have been torn asunder by the slander which was so fatal to Hero and Claudio.

III. The third movement concentrates all the previous groups upon a single purpose, which is to remedy the sole remaining breach of the drama. Borachio confesses the whole scheme in its details — Hero is innocent. Claudio at once repents of his hasty action ; his love returns in all its former intensity ; “thine image doth appear in the rare semblance that I loved it first.” He is ready to undergo any penalty for his sin — or, rather, mistake ; he is willing to make his deed undone. Don Pedro, too, manifests an equal contrition for the share which he has had in the wrong of an innocent woman. Repentance is now their condition, which, in its fullest manifestation, is the struggle of the soul to wipe out its wicked action. Both take means for counteracting the slander, during all time to come, by placing an epitaph upon her tomb indicating her character. Still, their act was not intentional, though rash and blameworthy ; hence their repentance cannot be prolonged, or their punishment severe. But their sorrow is genuine, and, hence, they are prepared for a restoration.

One of the penalties laid upon Claudio is that he should marry the niece of Leonato, since the daughter is dead. When she has approached him and removed her mask — behold, it is his Hero. The good Friar, anticipating just such an emergency, has concealed her in a religious house. Now he restores her to the first relation.

Claudio also must obtain this reward; through repentance he has made his deed undone, as far as lies in his power. Dogberry, too, is recompensed for his faithfulness in office, though intellect and learning are not his possessions. Don John is the person who really deserves punishment, which awaits him in a triple form at the hand of the Prince. The end is a double marriage, which is performed by the worthy Friar — the mediator of peace and union.

Thus the two pairs have traveled through the various obstacles, and are joined in the Family. They show two forms of interference with this institution. The misogamus pair, whose separation comes from within, and the wronged pair, whose separation comes from without — both equally must yield to the impulse of the domestic relation. The first are inherently comic; the second are not, though their difficulty is overcome mainly by a comic instrumentality. Disguise does not run through any one thread of the play, but its temporary employment in the form of masks, concealments, delusive shows, occurs in every portion. Fundamentally, therefore, it is not a comedy of Situation, but rather a comedy of Character, belonging to the involuntary phase — that is, the individuals are pursuing a comic end without intending it, even without knowing it. The distinction between the Romanic and Germanic elements is less marked, though observable. The Italian origin of part of the story is well known; Dogberry and his companions are rudely English; the thread of Benedick and Beatrice combines the intrigue of the one with the characterization of the other. The seriousness of the play, in its leading thread, still keeps it in the domain of Tragi-Comedy, though hovering quite on the boundary line of Pure Comedy.

IV. GROUP. — PURE COMEDIES.

This group differs mainly from the preceding group in the circumstance that all the serious elements of the drama are withdrawn into the background, or entirely eliminated. Generally, there are now two essential threads, both of which are comic — the one being more elevated and refined, the other more gross and sensual. Also, the Mediation is comic, and takes place through the instrumentalities of Comedy. The strong comic characters, too, are the victims of some delusive appearance, which is made to dissolve before their own eyes in the solution. The plays here, with one exception, depict some conflict with sexual love, though other relations of the Family are introduced. The group is composed of the following five dramas, which are now to be grasped in their fundamental relations :

Comedy of Errors. — Separation of parents and children through accident is overcome by Natural Resemblance — the most superficial of all kinds of mediation. The theme quite excludes sexual love.

Taming of the Shrew. — The double wrong of the father against his two daughters, both of whom are jeopardized through him in their relations of love, is mediated by a double Disguise — the external one of Lucentio, and the internal one of Petruchio.

Twelfth Night. — The conflict is now wholly internal — love is unrequited ; there is no external obstacle — as the father. All are in love, the power of which over man is represented as supreme. The solution is double — on the one hand, there is a change of individuals, which change

is mediated chiefly through the comic instrumentalities, Natural Resemblance and Disguise; on the other hand, love, springing from an ulterior motive, loses its object — the positive and the negative solution of unrequited love.

Love's Labor's Lost. — Learning attempts to create a world of its own, from which it seeks to exclude love; the result of the conflict is, learning is brought under the yoke of love on the one hand, and on the other it dissolves in its own pedantic absurdity.

Merry Wives of Windsor. — In the last three plays there is a love collision before marriage; now the two phases — before and after marriage — are combined in one action. The wife maintains the honor of the Family against both the libertine and the jealous husband, in the first thread; in the second the maiden upholds the right of love against both father and mother.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

This play should be placed first in the list of Shakespeare's Pure Comedies, not only on account of the period of its origin, but also on the score of logical development. It is simply a comedy of Situation, whose sole instrumentality is Natural Resemblance, for not even Disguise is employed. It, therefore, exhibits an action of the most external kind; human purpose is almost wholly removed from its sphere. Man is thus represented as controlled by chance; his will is reduced to the narrowest limits possible. All the individuals—even the clowns—are fully in earnest in the pursuit of their ends, though these ends are an utter deception. The characters are always doing something quite different from what they seem to be doing; there is an appearance continually dancing before their senses, whereby they are led into the most ridiculous acts. Comic Situation, into which the individual is thrust from without, through no volition of his own, is the rule of this drama; life is a complete, sensuous delusion. Nowhere else has the Poet indulged in such a play of wholly external influences.

It is easy to see that there can be but little development of character in a work of this kind. Character rests upon the internal nature of the person; his disposition must be shown in his actions, and his actions must, therefore, be made the means of its portraiture. For the Drama takes the human deed as the vehicle of expressing the feelings,

motives, purposes, thoughts—in fine, the entire spiritual nature—of man. Such is the Drama in its highest form. Freedom cannot be wholly obliterated. But, if the individual is made the victim of chance—of unforeseen external power—his character has little to do with his destiny. He is determined, not from within, but from without; his enforced actions thus become a very slight indication of his nature. Still, no doubt there is some manifestation of character, even under such circumstances, though it is very superficial and inadequate. In the present drama, therefore, characterization stands decidedly in the background. We are to think only of the ridiculous situations in which the people who appear in it are placed. .

The characterization, incomplete as it is, should, however, be noticed, and contrasted with the riper procedure of the Poet. It moves in certain stiff, traditional types, which hardly rise to a living, concrete individuality—that is, the persons are more like puppets than complete men and women—an abstraction rather than a reality. Let us take notice of the most definite figures here. The two Dromios are the ever-recurring clowns, with their merry pranks; Pinch is the old picture of the narrow-minded pedant, which is repeated by Shakespeare several times without essential variation. Adriana is the jealous shrew, whose scolding propensity the Poet will develop fully in a succeeding drama. All these forms are borrowed from older and foreign comedies. Their bareness is manifest; one or two peculiarities make up the sum of their characterization; the complete exhibition of all the qualities of a subjective nature, such as we find in other creations of the Poet, is wholly wanting. The individual, when thus made purely the sport of external influences, cannot show any of the deeper elements of character.

There are three movements to the drama, though the first and the last are very short — the one having more the nature of an introduction, the other of a hasty close. We are, in the beginning, told of the disruption of the family of *Ægeon*; this is the serious — indeed, almost tragic — background of the action; it furnishes the ethical element in which the play moves. The second part shows the “errors” which are rendered possible by this separation of the members of the Family. Here are found the comic situations, as well as the greater portion of the drama. The mistakes of the two pairs of twins, through Natural Resemblance, spring from their previous separation. The third part is the mutual recognition of parents and children, and the restoration of all the members of the disrupted Family. This reunion, in its turn, results from the mistakes which produce so much confusion.

I. The first movement is the narrative of *Ægeon*, who is the father, and, therefore, the head, of the Family. The two pairs of twins, and their personal resemblance, are noted; but an accident — a shipwreck — has separated *Ægeon* from his wife, from one of his sons, and one of the servants. Many years have elapsed; the twins have grown up to manhood; their relations, however, are unknown to themselves, to their parents, and to the world. Should they happen to meet, then the mistakes would follow. The family of *Ægeon* is thus cut in two just in the middle. Now comes the second separation — the father permits the remaining son and servant to travel in search of the lost brother. But they, too, disappear — do not return to the parent. We also learn, later in the play, that a corresponding misfortune happens to the mother in respect to the other children. Thus the Family seems utterly disrupted and destroyed, but just this unhappy

condition of things is the basis for a return to unity. The present family is endowed with certain peculiarities which will rescue it—which will force the world to untie the knot of difficulties which arise. These peculiar elements are the double pair of twins, the personal resemblance of the twin sons and of the twin servants, and the identity of their respective names. Here we see the chief means for a discovery of the lost members, and their restoration to the Family. The ground now being cleared, and all the pre-suppositions being explained, the main action of the play begins.

II. The second movement shows the mistakes which arise from a double Natural Resemblance, and the consequences of taking one person for another in society. These consequences are carried to such a degree of bewilderment that quite all the relations of life become confused and uncertain, and everything fixed seems to be unsettled; even institutions are turned into the sport of accident. The one thread moves about the Ephesian Antipholus as the central figure; he is a substantial and well-known citizen—an old and intimate friend of the ruler; in times past he has been a brave soldier in defense of the country. He is married also, and thus belongs to the domestic relation; still further, he is engaged in business, and, hence, is brought into familiar contact with the other members of the community. It will be seen that he is an important personage of society, to which he stands in manifold relations. He is known by everybody, and is recognized as having a certain established position and character. In general, he is the substantial man who is connected by an indefinite number of ties with the world around him. Now, into this net-work, a total stranger is

introduced, who resembles him, and is everywhere taken for him. This is the Syracusan Antipholus, who is totally unknown to all these relations, still he is thrown into them ; neither he nor society is aware of the change. Personal resemblance is the cause of the mistakes, and the sameness of names prevents the deception from being discovered. The remarkable result is that, by the displacement of one individual, the whole community is thrown into disorder.

To introduce more complications, the same circumstances are repeated in the two servants. The foreign Dromio is put into the relations of the Ephesian Dromio ; there thus arises a continual crossing of purposes, which can almost be reduced to a mathematical diagram, so completely external is the procedure.

The first of these relations, therefore, which is seriously disturbed is that of master and servant. The double similarity becomes the source of the most ridiculous confusion. The one Dromio is sent out upon an errand, and meets the wrong master ; it is evident that their presuppositions are entirely different — that their talk will lie in two wholly separate worlds. The result is that at first each supposes the other to be jesting ; but afterwards the matter becomes serious, and the servant gets a flogging. Now, when the rightful servant appears, he is no longer in his former relation to his master, on account of the intervention of the former servant. So they pass and repass, with increasing entanglement ; one party sends a Dromio, who comes to the wrong master with an incomprehensible message. All soon see that something is out of joint, yet what it is they cannot tell ; some external influence is clearly interfering, which is the more terrible because

unknown. The foreign master and servant become frightened; they very naturally conclude that it is the land of spirits and goblins; they will leave it at the earliest opportunity. But here, again, trouble arises; cause and effect no longer hold; their means for departure are defeated at every move. Dromio is sent to find a ship to sail away in, and brings back a remittance of money. Thus they are tossed about—the helpless victims of chance. It is no wonder that they believe themselves to be dreaming, to be transformed into beasts, to have come to a supernatural realm, for all natural mediation has ceased.

Next the difficulty is carried into the Family. The wife sends the servant to bring her husband home to dinner; again the wrong man is found; it is the Syracusan Antipholus, who has no wife, and who denies the relation on the spot. His answer is brought back to her; the result is a violent fit of jealousy. Then the woman appears in person—berates the stranger for his infidelity; the ethical feeling of the wife thus becomes comic, for its object is an appearance—a delusion. But he has to go home with her to dinner; the integrity of the Family seems in jeopardy; we tremble lest the mistake may lead to an ethical violation. But a happy turn is made—the young Syracusan is attracted to the unmarried sister, and turns away from the married woman. Now all is again right and proper. This sister, too, is victimized, for she thinks she is receiving the attentions of her brother-in-law—a fact which, no doubt, makes her hesitate longer than she otherwise would. Then comes the true husband to his own house; he finds himself locked out, and appearances look very suspicious; in his spleen he goes off and indulges in

emotion to an alienation ; to heal the disruption, both religious and secular forms of mediation have been introduced. If there is any lesson to be drawn from this part of the play, it is that intellect gives a more stable foundation for marriage than the sudden impulse of passion ; Benedick and Beatrice could not have been torn asunder by the slander which was so fatal to Hero and Claudio.

III. The third movement concentrates all the previous groups upon a single purpose, which is to remedy the sole remaining breach of the drama. Borachio confesses the whole scheme in its details — ~~Hero is innocent~~. Claudio at once repents of his hasty action ; his love returns in all its former intensity ; “thine image doth appear in the rare semblance that I loved it first.” He is ready to undergo any penalty for his sin — or, rather, mistake ; he is willing to make his deed undone. Don Pedro, too, manifests an equal contrition for the share which he has had in the wrong of an innocent woman. Repentance is now their condition, which, in its fullest manifestation, is the struggle of the soul to wipe out its wicked action. Both take means for counteracting the slander, during all time to come, by placing an epitaph upon her tomb indicating her character. Still, their act was not intentional, though rash and blameworthy ; hence their repentance cannot be prolonged, or their punishment severe. But their sorrow is genuine, and, hence, they are prepared for a restoration.

One of the penalties laid upon Claudio is that he should marry the niece of Leonato, since the daughter is dead. When she has approached him and removed her mask — behold, it is his Hero. The good Friar, anticipating just such an emergency, has concealed her in a religious house. Now he restores her to the first relation.

Claudio also must obtain this reward; through repentance he has made his deed undone, as far as lies in his power. Dogberry, too, is recompensed for his faithfulness in office, though intellect and learning are not his possessions. Don John is the person who really deserves punishment, which awaits him in a triple form at the hand of the Prince. The end is a double marriage, which is performed by the worthy Friar—the mediator of peace and union.

Thus the two pairs have traveled through the various obstacles, and are joined in the Family. They show two forms of interference with this institution. The misogamus pair, whose separation comes from within, and the wronged pair, whose separation comes from without—both equally must yield to the impulse of the domestic relation. The first are inherently comic; the second are not, though their difficulty is overcome mainly by a comic instrumentality. Disguise does not run through any one thread of the play, but its temporary employment in the form of masks, concealments, delusive shows, occurs in every portion. Fundamentally, therefore, it is not a comedy of Situation, but rather a comedy of Character, belonging to the involuntary phase—that is, the individuals are pursuing a comic end without intending it, even without knowing it. The distinction between the Romanic and Germanic elements is less marked, though observable. The Italian origin of part of the story is well known; Dogberry and his companions are rudely English; the thread of Benedick and Beatrice combines the intrigue of the one with the characterization of the other. The seriousness of the play, in its leading thread, still keeps it in the domain of Tragi-Comedy, though hovering quite on the boundary line of Pure Comedy.

IV. GROUP. — PURE COMEDIES.

This group differs mainly from the preceding group in the circumstance that all the serious elements of the drama are withdrawn into the background, or entirely eliminated. Generally, there are now two essential threads, both of which are comic—the one being more elevated and refined, the other more gross and sensual. Also, the Mediation is comic, and takes place through the instrumentalities of Comedy. The strong comic characters, too, are the victims of some delusive appearance, which is made to dissolve before their own eyes in the solution. The plays here, with one exception, depict some conflict with ~~sexual~~ love, though other relations of the Family are introduced. The group is composed of the following five dramas, which are now to be grasped in their fundamental relations:

Comedy of Errors.—Separation of parents and children through accident is overcome by Natural Resemblance—the most superficial of all kinds of mediation. The theme quite excludes sexual love.

Taming of the Shrew.—The double wrong of the father against his two daughters, both of whom are jeopardized through him in their relations of love, is mediated by a double Disguise—the external one of Lucentio, and the internal one of Petruchio.

Twelfth Night.—The conflict is now wholly internal—love is unrequited; there is no external obstacle—as the father. All are in love, the power of which over man is represented as supreme. The solution is double—on the one hand, there is a change of individuals, which change

is mediated chiefly through the comic instrumentalities, Natural Resemblance and Disguise; on the other hand, love, springing from an ulterior motive, loses its object—the positive and the negative solution of unrequited love.

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a naughty revenge. In all these cases the manifold relations of the Family are endangered by a mere appearance; the individuals are victims of a mistake; one person is substituted for another in the wrong place. The result is that the ethical ties of marriage, for a time, become the playthings of accident. The same phase is reflected in low life in the affair of Dromio and the kitchen queen.

Other complications follow, which it is not necessary to give in detail; the result is, the wife and the community consider the husband to be mad, and Pinch is called upon to cast out the devil. This is the extreme point; man now seems to be irrational — seems to have lost entirely the ability of understanding his relation in the world. Yet it is an appearance merely; Antipholus is still sane, though he is now bound like a maniac. The truth is, society itself has become irrational in its delusion; Mistaken Identity has brought it to the verge of dissolution. But the Family is quite disrupted, for the husband, who is here in chains, must charge, and, indeed, does charge, the wife with the worst species of infidelity. Such is the outcome of the domestic thread of the play. The comic element is that the whole difficulty is a phantom springing from a deception of the senses; the spectator knows where the trouble lies, and is aware that there is no real conflict; he can laugh to his heart's content at a collision which must vanish at once when the cause of the delusion is discovered.

The third principle which is involved in this entanglement is business — the commercial relations of the community. Of Angelo, the goldsmith, a chain has been ordered, which he, however, delivers to the wrong Antipholus, and afterwards demands payment of the other

Antipholus. The matter is at first treated as a jest, then it grows serious, and at last an officer is called in to enforce the demand. Here Authority is drawn into the meshes, and is victimized by an appearance. Moreover, the goldsmith wants to pay his debts with the money; his good name and commercial credit are involved. Public order is disturbed; an encounter takes place on the street, when the Syracusan pair flee to an abbey—to the protection of a religious house, whereby the abbess, a representative of the Church, becomes entangled in the fantastic sport of chance. Let us notice the situation. The community has now unconsciously eliminated both disturbing elements; the two pairs cannot live in the same society if their resemblance continues to remain unknown. Yet they have done no wrong. But the difficulty cannot rest here; the abbess has defied the Family in the wife, and the Law in the officer; the conflict can only be settled by an appeal to the supreme authority of the land.

This is the State, whose highest representative—the Duke—now comes along very conveniently, bringing Ægeon to execution for a violation of law. All parties rush forward to the ruler with their grievances; the testimony is heard, but the strange thing is that each side produces several witnesses and proves the truth of its statement; the evidence of the senses becomes a mass of confusion and contradiction. The ruler is himself drawn into the delusion; he concludes that they all have drunk of Circe's cup. To solve the difficulty is beyond his power; the matter is incapable of any adjustment. The supreme institution—the State—which has to secure justice to man, is whirled into the wild play of chance, and cannot perform its function. The drama can go no further; the

solution must soon come, or human institutions will show themselves less firm and substantial than an empty appearance. So much for the second movement.

III. The third essential element of the action is now to be ~~unfolded, namely, the discovery of the difficulty, and~~ the restoration of the separated members of the Family. For the mystery will be pursued until its origin is found; the human mind is rational, and cannot believe that the world is irrational; it must investigate any unusual disturbance of causation. *Ægeon*, the father, is present with the Duke, as before stated; he recognizes his son, whom, however, he takes to be the Syracusan Antipholus; but Resemblance still has sway, for it is the Ephesian Antipholus. Then the Syracusan Antipholus appears; at once the source of the sensuous deception is brought home to the senses themselves when the brothers are seen side by side. Moreover, there is now a mutual recognition between the one son and the father; they have been separated only a few years. The mother is found in the abbess; *Ægeon* is pardoned; all the members of the Family are again united. The other apparent conflicts of the wife, *Adriana*, of Business, of the State, are fully explained; the delusion vanishes like a dream; ethical harmony once more prevails; the world is no longer a deceptive mirage of which man is the helpless victim.

The solution of a comedy which rests upon Natural Resemblance is thus made manifest. The resembling individuals are brought together—in fact, they are forced together by the disturbance which they produce. The cause is then clear; the serious purposes, the angry conflicts, are traced to a mistake—to a false conclusion resulting from a sensuous appearance. Such is the one instru-

mentality of the present play—Natural Resemblance—whose combinations are quite exhausted in its manifold situations. This narrowness makes it somewhat bald and abstract; its externality, too, can never engage human interest very deeply. Still, the simple means is wonderfully employed; it temporarily reduces to its sway the highest institutions, and confounds all the relations of life; to the individual the world seems enchanted, while to the world the individual seems crazy—that is, both sides have lost their true relation toward each other; both sides appear to have become irrational. We become reconciled, however, with this unfree and chaotic representation of human action when we see its profound ethical purpose, namely, the restoration of the disrupted Family.

Let us, even at the risk of being charged with undue subtilization, try to reach down to the foundation of the dramatic instrumentality here employed. Mistaken Identity, as used in this and other comedies, shows how the individual is through society, and society through the individual. We see that, if one unit be displaced and another taken for it, the whole fabric will fall into disorder. All must be reflected in each, and each in all. If one person is put in the place of another person without their knowing the fact and without society's knowing it—that is, without the reflection of all in the one, and of the one in all—the world becomes a craze, and man seems to be irrational. The individual must have society, in which he finds his true relations—he can exist as a reasonable being only in society; on the other hand, society requites the favor and recognizes him as this individual, and none other, in all his manifold relations, and thus gives him a true objective personality. Mistaken Identity steps between

society and the individual, and, for a time, destroys their connection. Each side, having its existence through the other, will, by such separation, rapidly pass into confusion and dissolution. But the difficulty rests upon Mistaken Identity; not upon Lost Identity; ~~the~~ trouble, therefore, is not permanent, but the mistake is discovered, and the old relations are all restored.

The play before us is, hence, to be classified as a comedy of Situation, whose instrumentality is the first in order, the simplest, and most external of all—Natural Resemblance. Such was the Poet's beginning; how his Comedy deepens, and becomes more concrete in its means and in its characters, will be seen in the plays to be discussed hereafter.

The interpretation should bring out prominently the ethical elements, which always constitute the living principle of the Drama. These ethical elements are not intended to be confined to mere subjective morality—to the demands of individual conscience. Their purport is far broader; the Ethical World signifies essentially the world of institutions. In the present drama the Family is the sphere in which the action takes place, though other institutions play in; the movement is from the separation of its members to their restoration; between these two extremes lies the entire work.

The disruption of the closest domestic ties is of tragic import, and constitutes the serious element of the drama under consideration. The background is dark and threatening, whose most somber shade is found in the fate of Ægeon, who is even being led out to execution. The parent, in search of his children, has fallen into conflict with Law. Here we behold a genuine tragic collision, with

its two justifiable sides. But of course the comic element is paramount, and strengthened by the contrast with the serious thread. Its force lies in deception — in the reduction of the individual and society to a huge delusion — in making institutions the sport of a mere appearance.

Thus both the Tragic and the Comic are present, side by side, though not completely transfused. Another point must not be overlooked — the entire comic effect rests upon the fact that the audience fully understands the source of the mistakes and complications; the characters, ~~too, are, for the most part,~~ in deep earnest, and do not sport with themselves; thus there is felt to be a chasm between the laughing spectator and the sober-faced actor. Such is, however, the nature of all Comedy of Situation — the audience must be placed above the deception of the characters.

Nor should the reader expect too much of interpretation; no analysis of an artistic work can take the place of the work itself. An explanation of wit is not, and ought not to be, witty, else it is no true explanation; criticism of poetry, too, is not poetical, but it must quite free itself of the poetical form. A statement of the chemical ingredients of water will not take the place of water itself to a thirsty man; just as little can the sensuous charm and exhilaration of Art be supplied by an abstract account of its content. The feelings often revolt against an analytic interpretation, because people expect too much; they are dissatisfied at the absence of what seems the very essence of the production, namely, the sensuous form. But explanation implies always a change of this form, which is, therefore, just the side which disappears. Poetical natures strongly protest against the substitution

of the interpretation for the poem. They are right ; no such substitution ought for a moment to be entertained by the critic.

But to ascertain the rationale of an artistic product is not only reasonable, but indispensable. A great drama is a phenomenon quite as wonderful as any which Nature furnishes ; let its law be investigated and stated as soon as possible. In fact, Art can be elevated and sustained only by the retroactive power of the critical judgment. The difference between a barbarous and a cultivated taste is acknowledged ; whence does it arise ? Only from the application of truer canons of Art. But these canons are originally derived from the understanding, though they descend into the feelings and become instinctive in their influence upon the taste of the individual. Simple emotion is blind ; it should be directed and filled with intelligence. Feel deeply about that which is rational ; reason ought always to furnish the content. The difference between the savage and the civilized man lies, not so much in the feelings themselves, as in the objects about which each person feels. Do not, therefore, read an interpretation of a work of Art with the expectation of finding therein the imaginative or emotional element of that work — disappointment will surely follow.

TAMING OF THE SHREW.

The sole comic instrumentality of *Comedy of Errors* was said to be Natural Resemblance. A step in advance is now to be taken; the essential principle of *Taming of the Shrew* is Disguise. Comedy of Situation will thus have shown its two fundamental forms in these two dramas, and there will have been manifested the progress from the less concrete form, in which human freedom is not yet developed, to the more concrete form, in which one individual, at least, is free. For an external resemblance is unknown to the persons who happen to be alike, whereas a disguise must be known to one of the characters at all events. Still, in the play before us, Disguise is not the sole element; there is also the rude, yet bold, advance to characterization. This principle is seen in Katherine and Petruchio, whose peculiar traits, and not the external situation, constitute the emphatic point of the action. Hence Comedy of Character begins to make its appearance, in its definitive shape, in *Taming of the Shrew*, although Comedy of Situation, in the form of Disguise, is still the paramount element. The interest of ~~the~~ play lies chiefly in tracing this inner development, and in unfolding the relation to the other works of the Poet, who can now be seen rising from the simplest and most jejune to the richest and most varied manifestations of his Art.

If we grasp together the entire action of *Taming of the Shrew*, its scheme will be found to be a play within a play.

Thus its nature is double; but this duplicity falls asunder into two wholly separate parts, and the work quite loses its unity — at least, the connecting thread is very slender. The twofold element is not worked into symmetry; it is not ~~fused together into an harmonious unity~~. In later dramas the Poet will employ this form of a play within a play with supreme effect, and mould its contradictory sides into a consistent and beautiful totality. Here, however, he drops the one part with the so-called Induction, except in a few short passages. It would seem as if he could not fully master his plan, and was compelled to throw it aside; indeed, his procedure, judged by his riper method, will be seen to be inadequate.

The significance of a play within a play is that the audience be taken into the action, which is thus doubled and rendered more difficult of development. The spectator beholds, not only a representation of some occurrence, but also a representation of himself as a spectator of that occurrence. The play plays itself for itself; the theater seems no longer separated by the chasm between actors and audience, but both become one — each side is present upon the stage. Now, if the whole drama is set in such a frame-work, the actual spectator becomes superfluous and drops out, for he is no longer addressed; such a dramatic form, therefore, is too large, and transcends the inherent limitation of the Art. But if, on the contrary, such a play within a play is introduced only in the ~~course of the~~ main action, and is subordinated wholly to it, then we have a very effective instrument of dramatic power. This is seen, for instance, in *Hamlet* and in *Tempest*, where the mature procedure of the Poet is manifest. But in *Taming of the Shrew* he instinctively dropped the unwieldy form

with which he began; he had to abandon the audience on the stage for the real audience. Hence there are two parts, which may be developed in succession.

The Induction is only a preparation for something which never takes place, and, hence, it stands by itself. Its comic effects proceed from Disguise, not of persons merely, but of the whole external world which surrounds the individual. Christopher Sly, a drunken tinker of the humblest condition of life, is suddenly transferred to the dwelling of a nobleman, and is made to believe that he is a great lord. On all sides he beholds the evidences of wealth and luxury; beautiful pictures and gorgeous tapestry strike his eye in every direction; delicious music falls upon his ear; the fragrance of rose-water is not omitted in this fairy-land of pleasure—in fine, every object which can enchant and seduce the senses of man is suddenly thrust upon the poor and dissipated tinker. Servants approach, with submissive mien, to offer their services; even a wife appears, the fair lady of the mansion, who caresses him and loads him with affectionate attentions. It is plain that the object here is to disguise the external surroundings, to make the individual believe that his past life has been a dream, to possess him with the notion that the real is unreal and that the unreal is real. The whole plan rests upon deception of the senses, and, unless these senses are corrected and guided by the understanding, a human being is seen to be no more than a dream. The world into which Sly is suddenly thrust is so delightful, so intoxicating, that he, being a man of sensual gratification merely, is easily deluded—in fact, must be deluded—into the belief in its existence and in his changed condition. The nature of this disguise should

be noticed; it is not the disguise of persons merely, but of persons and all their surroundings — it is the disguise of the whole external world. Hence Mistaken Identity of the person is not the principle here.

But the main element of deception is the play, which is now to be acted before the tinker. This gives the sole motive for its introduction. Like a lord of that time, he commands the players to be brought in, and their representation is given in his own house. Thus it will be seen that the play within the play has reference to Sly alone. But, from the time it begins till the end, this side drops quite out of sight; the actors direct themselves to the real audience. We may now follow their example, and give a brief analysis of the drama which they are representing, without paying any further attention to the Induction. The connection between the two parts, though slight, and not by any means organic, should, however, be observed. Both have Disguise as their comic instrumentality, though in different manners — the one has the disguise of the external world, the other of persons alone.

The ethical movement of the play lies wholly in the sphere of the Family. Parental violation places itself in the way of marriage, and, hence, must be met and overcome. The father, by his action, has really excluded his two daughters from a rational union; he is, therefore, the obstacle which is to be removed in the course of the drama. He thus commits a wrong against his children, though in the exercise of a valid authority. The comic power of the character is for us to witness how rapidly and completely he is reduced to nothing when he sets himself against the higher principle, namely, the right of the child to enter the Family. The gentle and dutiful

daughter hoodwinks her parent in order to marry the man whom she loves; the rough and undutiful daughter has to be forcibly subordinated to the domestic relation by her husband, after her father has rendered that relation well-nigh impossible through his weakness and neglect. The movement is, therefore, from the double violation of the parent to the restoration of the children to the Family. The laugh turns against the man who seeks to nullify an institution in maintaining some less important right of his own; he is made a shadow, a mockery, a comic character.

The general organization of the play proper may be grasped by the mind in about the following manner: The first movement will portray the wrong of the parents, and will also introduce the means whereby it is ultimately overcome. The second movement will exhibit the conflict between parent, suitors, and daughters in its full vigor and with manifold complications. Here each daughter is the center of a distinct group; the result in both cases is the triumph of the principle of the Family. The third movement will show the reconciliation of the successful pairs with all the elements which were before antagonistic to their union.

I. 1. The drama at once introduces to us one of the foreign suitors, Lucentio, with his servant, Tranio. Lucentio is a young man of wealthy and distinguished parentage, whose home is in the neighboring city of Pisa; he has come to Padua — “nursery of arts” — for the purpose of instituting “a course of learning and ingenious studies.” His external qualifications are told in order to show that he was, in all respects, the peer of Bianca. In birth, wealth, and social position there seems to be but little

difference between them, nor were they unsuitable in age. But the true, internal bond of attraction lies in their common intellectual pursuits—in their aspiration for culture; both exhibit, not only an interest, but a strong desire for learning. The servant, Tranio, is also worthy of note; he is not the low clown, like Grumio, but he ~~is a polished man of the world.~~ Dressed in the clothes of his master he can play the part of a gentleman with admirable dexterity. He is more the companion than the menial of his superior, who consults him on all important matters. Still, both these persons are stiff and conventional shapes, without any very distinct individuality of character.

The second of the foreign suitors appears somewhat later, but may be mentioned here. It is Petruchio, who is depicted with a most decided dramatic vitality. He has gone through with the roughest experiences of the world; in wild adventures on land and sea he has been hardened in body, and, it would seem, to a still greater degree hardened in will. On slight provocation he takes his servant, Grumio, by the ears; in fact, both master and servant here stand as the rudest contrast to Lucentio and Tranio. Each set has its function to perform, and is gifted with just the qualities requisite for its work. The coarse nature of Petruchio cares to wed only for money, while Lucentio will yield to love alone.

2. Such are the two chief instrumentalities; we are now ready to cast a look at the elements which they are to work upon. Here comes what we are seeking—the parent, Baptista, with his two daughters, Bianca and Katherine—to which group may be conveniently added the two native suitors of Bianca, Gremio and Hortensio. The maidens naturally catch our first glance. Katherine is the

shrew — she is utterly refractory to every rational restraint. The difficulty is that the father has never been able to subordinate her to the proper position of a child of the Family. She has now come to defy social usages; prescription is a barrier which it is her delight to leap over. Katherine has, therefore, received no domestic education; the parent cannot avoid taking his share of the blame — the primary foundation of character, the training of the child and its subjection in the Family, is wholly wanting. What is the result of this neglect? It is seen in a disposition which may be called absolute caprice — which recognizes no demands of social etiquette, no restraints of the tongue, nor even the ties of blood. She is the wanton tyrant of Bianca, who has all the suitors; she abuses the guests, disobeys her father, beats her sister. Still, she wants admiration — in fact, she wants a husband; but she feels that her lack of self-command has become an insuperable obstacle to marriage. Such is her character, and such is the wrong of the parent, which has resulted in her exclusion from the Family, and condemned her, as every prospect would indicate, to an unwilling life of old-maidenhood.

Bianca, the second daughter, is not so graphically drawn; in general, she possesses a mild, sweet disposition, yet is capable of a decided display of will; she also has a taste for study and a desire for culture. Two native suitors are in a warm tournament for her favor; there is the old, wealthy Gremio — the typical scarecrow of youthful hearts beating with hot passion; there is also Hortensio, whose chief object is, seemingly, Bianca's money; but this he can get just as well, and afterwards does get, by marrying a rich widow. It is clear that to both these proposed alliances is

in which everybody participates—appearance for a time controls the world. The action of this thread will be two-fold—the attempt to purchase the consent of the father, and the attempt to gain the love of the maiden.

The wealthy suitors bid, before Baptista, for the hand of his daughter in lively competition, since with him now the whole transaction is a matter of money. Herein his conduct becomes comic—such is his just retribution: he thinks that he is determining the affair himself, whereas ~~he is a mere shadow~~, being cajoled by his own child, and being victimized by the disguises. For the daughter on the one hand is secretly disposing of herself according to the right of love, and on the other hand he is deceived by the two supposed teachers, and by the pretended suitor, Tranio. His reward is just and logical: having wronged his child—formerly by his wanton prohibition, and at present by his mercenary action—he is truly not a parent—he is only an appearance: hence he is treated as an unreal mockery. For the gentle and dutiful Bianca engages herself and marries without his knowledge: though Lucentio also outbids his rival in the quantity of dower, that is a subordinate—indeed, insignificant—matter: the couple are clandestinely united by the priest, and the father is disregarded. When, in the end, he discovers that all his planning and chaffering have been to no purpose, and, in fact, absurd, he gets angry—but he has to submit. The comic element of his conduct is the pursuit of a phantom, which he takes to be reality: his punishment is to have his own nullity held up before his eyes.

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entrance into Baptista's family is due to the old beau, Gremio, who is thus entrapped into introducing and recommending his most dangerous rival — not without a promise, however, of furthering his own cause. The second is Hortensio, as a musician, who is to give lessons on the lute. Now we witness the amusing conflict of disguises, in which everybody, to a greater or less extent, is led about by an illusive appearance. Both suitors employ the same means of deception, but never seem to suspect each other of their own deed. But through this fantastic haze the rational element still peers; the end is the true formation of the Family. Each lover has the right object in view, namely, to obtain the affection of Bianca, though this has to be reached through the secret mask. They thus tacitly recognize the right of choice; the maiden is ultimately to dispose of herself. The father has forced the deception upon himself by his wrong interference; it is not his favor which is the essential principle. For the Family is possible without the consent of the parent; and it is not his consent which can call it into existence. Lucentio and Hortensio, therefore, proceed directly to gain the favor of Bianca, which is the main and the true object; both employ the same means — a very good sign of its necessity and its effectiveness.

The two disguised teachers begin their instruction; they meet at the house of Baptista, where at once begins a struggle for preference. Each, under the cover of a lesson, makes a declaration of love to Bianca. The contest is lively and laughable, but the result of the wooing is that Hortensio is rejected and Lucentio accepted. Reciprocal affection is now announced; the unity of emotion is not only attained, but acknowledged; thus

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2. It is now time to go back and pick up the second thread, which was temporarily dropped—that of Katherine and Petruchio. Comedy of Character, though in rough outlines, is now the principle; the external disguise is laid aside; the mask, in the case of Petruchio at least, is

internal — is to be sought for in the mind. Katherine, as before stated, refuses all subordination in the Family and in society; to become a member of the Family, therefore — to be a wife — she has to be tamed; she has to be subsumed by force. Given her character, there is no avoiding the conclusion, for absolute caprice is her fundamental principle of conduct. Now comes Petruchio, who can be the rudest man in all Italy, who has endured in ~~his own~~ body the wildest buffets of the world. His experience prepares him well for the task; he can meet ~~caprice with caprice~~, and, if need be, blow with blow. Money he declares to be his object in marrying, and he is not particular about the rest. This, however, is only a less important phase of his rude nature; it would be a great mistake to consider the leading trait of Petruchio to be avarice. The course of the drama will reveal the true impelling power of his conduct — it is the pleasure which he takes in taming just such a shrew by means of her own shrewishness. He thus has a tinge of the highest type of comic delineation — he is purposely comic, and takes delight in his own play. His method is clear and logical; he serves up her own character to her; his plan is retribution. As she acts with absolute caprice, he treats her with absolute caprice. He thus shows herself to herself — as it were, in a mirror — and makes her feel, even in her own body, what she really is. Her deeds, her treatment of others, and her character are thus brought home to herself.

Were this rude spectacle brought before us for mere amusement, its barbarity would justly give offense. But there is a profound ethical element which is always felt, and which would reconcile us with the action of Petruchio if

it were not carried to excess. As he is going to marry Katherine, and as she has openly defied parent and renounced submission in the Family, it becomes the first necessity that she be subordinated in her new relation, which is also the Family. This she will not do herself; it must, then, be done by another. Ethical life demands that every human being belong to the domestic institution; even a shrew cannot be excepted; the law is universal.

The reason why Katherine is won is not as plain as it might be; no doubt she wants to have a husband, but this desire has not hitherto been strong enough to control her conduct. The ground of her yielding seems to be that she has now met her master in her own realm—a person whom she cannot affect in the least degree by her caprice. She storms, he laughs; she refuses, he takes her refusal as a caprice—like all her other words and acts; he keeps an imperturbable spirit in her wildest tossings—on no side can she pierce his humor and adroitness. Such a man she has not met; hitherto she has been able to put everybody to flight with a single volley. His treatment is to throw her into the world of caprice—of subjective arbitrariness. He disregards all ceremony; he violates all social requirements; he is just like Katherine, except that the picture is so magnified that its look startles even her. The parent, Baptista, previously so glad of the match, becomes alarmed, too, at his behavior. The wildest oddity is manifested by Petruchio during the marriage; then he hurries out of the city to his country-place, where his caprice can reign supreme without danger of interference. He reduces her spirit by hunger; then he will not suffer her to have any sleep; and, what is worst of all, he sends off her new dress. No food, no rest, no fine

wanting the essential element of marriage, namely, reciprocal love; the maiden is adverse or indifferent. Now the third suitor appears — it is Lucentio, a man of proper age, of similar tastes, of great wealth and high social position. But these points are afterwards brought out fully; at present the supreme motive must be the tender passion — this must go before all other grounds. Lucentio sees the fair Bianca; enough — it is a case of love at first sight — it is the spontaneous impulse of the soul. Still, her modest behavior is here shown; and her desire to be in the company of her books and instruments is also expressed. The youth now deserts his studies — at least we hear no more of them; he appears to have neglected Aristotle and taken Ovid, in accordance with the hint of his keen-eyed servant; he becomes the thrall of Love. But that which stamps him as the triumphant suitor is her requital of his passion; thus the two become one in emotion, and the internal basis of the Family is laid in their hearts.

Here the Poet drops the theme for which he almost seems to have prepared the foundation, namely, the conflict between study and love. — Lucentio totally abandons his course of learning; it engages his thoughts no more. But Shakespeare has not neglected to develop this collision in another drama. The entire action of *Love's Labor's Lost* turns upon just such a conflict; there it is shown how the most serious purposes of study and literary ambition are assailed and overcome by a visitation of the arrowed god.

Against the younger daughter, too, the father has committed an unintentional, yet very real, wrong. He has declared that she shall not be given in marriage till the elder daughter have obtained a husband. Bianca's chances are

thus brought to depend upon an external accident ; indeed, she is made to suffer the consequences of her sister's shrewish disposition. It is a palpable violation of the right of love—the parent becomes the obstacle ; he must be circumvented. But this difficulty is soon obviated by the arrival of a suitor for Katherine ; nevertheless, Baptista afterwards falls into another grievous offense of the same kind—he barter away the hand of his child for money ; he is ready to subject love to gain. Hence comes the justification—nay, the necessity—of his deception. For the daughter's right is paramount in such a conflict, according to Shakespeare's ethical code, since she insists upon the true basis of the Family against the will of the parent. Thus the second wrong—that done to Bianca—is portrayed.

Such, in general, is the first movement of the drama—the preparation ; it shows the double violation on the part of the parent, and also introduces the means for its removal ; we behold the two suitors who will rescue the two daughters and bring them into the domestic relation. To unfold the manner of this proceeding is the object of the second movement, to which we may now pass. There will be, henceforth, two distinct—almost separate—threads, namely, the groups around Bianca and around Katherine. The Comedy of Situation and the Comedy of Character here run alongside of each other, and finally intermingle in the solution.

II. 1. The first thread will exhibit the suit for the hand of Bianca ; the struggle of all the persons here will be to hoodwink the parent and to deceive each other. For this purpose three disguises are introduced, to which a fourth is afterwards added. It is a carnival of deception,

in which everybody participates—appearance for a time controls the world. The action of this thread will be two-fold—the attempt to purchase the consent of the father, and the attempt to gain the love of the maiden.

The wealthy suitors bid, before Baptista, for the hand of his daughter in lively competition, since with him now the whole transaction is a matter of money. Herein his conduct becomes comic—such is his just retribution; he thinks that he is determining the affair himself, whereas he is a mere shadow, being cajoled by his own child, and being victimized by the disguises. For the daughter on the one hand is secretly disposing of herself according to the right of love, and on the other hand he is deceived by the two supposed teachers, and by the pretended suitor, Tranio. His reward is just and logical; having wronged his child—formerly by his wanton prohibition, and at present by his mercenary action—he is truly not a parent—he is only an appearance; hence he is treated as an unreal mockery. For the gentle and dutiful Bianca engages herself and marries without his knowledge; though Lucentio also outbids his rival in the quantity of dower, that is a subordinate—indeed, insignificant—matter; the couple are clandestinely united by the priest, and the father is disregarded. When, in the end, he discovers that all his planning and chaffering have been to no purpose, and, in fact, absurd, he gets angry—but he has to submit. The comic element of his conduct is the pursuit of a phantom, which he takes to be reality; his punishment is to have his own nullity held up before his eyes.

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2. It is now time to go back and pick up the second thread, which was temporarily dropped — that of Katherine and Petruchio. Comedy of Character, though in rough outlines, is now the principle; the external disguise is laid aside; the mask, in the case of Petruchio at least, is

internal — is to be sought for in the mind. Katherine, as before stated, refuses all subordination in the Family and in society; to become a member of the Family, therefore — to be a wife — she has to be tamed; she has to be subsumed by force. Given her character, there is no avoiding the conclusion, for absolute caprice is her fundamental principle of conduct. Now comes Petruchio, who can be the rudest man in all Italy, who has endured in his own body the wildest buffets of the world. His experience prepares him well for the task; he can meet ~~caprice with caprice~~, and, if need be, blow with blow. Money he declares to be his object in marrying, and he is not particular about the rest. This, however, is only a less important phase of his rude nature; it would be a great mistake to consider the leading trait of Petruchio to be avarice. The course of the drama will reveal the true impelling power of his conduct — it is the pleasure which he takes in taming just such a shrew by means of her own shrewishness. He thus has a tinge of the highest type of comic delineation — he is purposely comic, and takes delight in his own play. His method is clear and logical; he serves up her own character to her; his plan is retribution. As she acts with absolute caprice, he treats her with absolute caprice. He thus shows herself to herself — as it were, in a mirror — and makes her feel, even in her own body, what she really is. Her deeds, her treatment of others, and her character are thus brought home to herself.

Were this rude spectacle brought before us for mere amusement, its barbarity would justly give offense. But there is a profound ethical element which is always felt, and which would reconcile us with the action of Petruchio if

it were not carried to excess. As he is going to marry Katherine, and as she has openly defied parent and renounced submission in the Family, it becomes the first necessity that she be subordinated in her new relation, which is also the Family. This she will not do herself; it must, then, be done by another. Ethical life demands that every human being belong to the domestic institution; even a shrew cannot be excepted; the law is universal.

The reason why Katherine is won is not as plain as it might be; no doubt she wants to have a husband, but this desire has not hitherto been strong enough to control her conduct. The ground of her yielding seems to be that she has now met her master in her own realm—a person whom she cannot affect in the least degree by her caprice. She storms, he laughs; she refuses, he takes her refusal as a caprice—like all her other words and acts; he keeps an imperturbable spirit in her wildest tossings—on no side can she pierce his humor and adroitness. Such a man she has not met; hitherto she has been able to put everybody to flight with a single volley. His treatment is to throw her into the world of caprice—of subjective arbitrariness. He disregards all ceremony; he violates all social requirements; he is just like Katherine, except that the picture is so magnified that its look startles even her. The parent, Baptista, previously so glad of the match, becomes alarmed, too, at his behavior. The wildest oddity is manifested by Petruchio during the marriage; then he hurries out of the city to his country-place, where his caprice can reign supreme without danger of interference. He reduces her spirit by hunger; then he will not suffer her to have any sleep; and, what is worst of all, he sends off her new dress. No food, no rest, no fine

clothes, are permitted in that capricious world. Finally, nature herself, the sun, the moon, the stars, are dragged in by his whimsicality—to which she must subject her opinion—and she is compelled to deny the existence of her very senses. This is the lowest point of submission—the shrew is now tamed; indeed, her individuality has been quite wiped out in the process.

Here the wrong of Petruchio is seen; he has succeeded so well that he has almost destroyed the basis for a true union between man and woman. His capricious behavior, however, he appears to put off when his end is attained; so much can be said in his favor. Still, the result is repulsive; it is not, at least, the ideal relation of marriage. The wife is not a slave; her subordination is to the Family as an institution rather than to the husband as an individual. She is entitled to her individuality as well as he; both are, however, to be subsumed under the higher principle—the institution—of which the man, it must be confessed, is as yet the head and representative. Therefore we are but partially reconciled with the outcome; Petruchio is not free from a violation, and we feel that justice demands some taming for him, too. He belongs to the class of voluntary comic characters, since his end is known and willed by himself, and is really comic to himself. Katharine is, on the contrary, an involuntary comic character; she is the victim of a delusion—of a foible—the nature of which must be brought home to her by a foreign means.

Thus both the daughters, Bianca and Katharine, have landed in marriage. Each had an obstacle—the former in the will of the parent, the latter in her own disposition. The removal of the first, or external, obstacle is effected

by deception through disguise; the removal of the second, or internal, obstacle is effected by retribution through caprice. This brings us to the end of the second movement of the drama.

III. We have now reached the point where the Solution can be given, the object of which is to make the play clear to itself—to render the various characters conscious of what has been done. In order to round off the action into completeness, the deception of Baptista and others, the secret marriage of Bianca, the taming of Katharine, must be revealed.

1. The explosion takes place by the unexpected appearance of the real Vincenzio, father of Lucentio, upon the scene. He comes to pay a visit to his son, but he lights upon the Pedant disguised as himself. Here is clearly some knavery; then he further recognizes the servants, Tranio and Biondello, in their unwonted garments. All three try to maintain their disguise by audacious lying, and even by causing the arrest of the old gentleman. But the secret is out; Lucentio, the son, appears, acknowledges the whole transaction, and sues for forgiveness. He tells the story of the deception—love was the cause, which has already reached its full fruition in marriage. Baptista also is present, and sees that his consent has been wholly disregarded. Both parents are at first angry on account of the deception which has been practiced upon them, but the essential thing has been attained, and they have only to get into a good humor again. Such is the termination of the intrigue, whose center is Bianca; the suitors and the parent are brought to see their delusion, as well as to know the means of their humiliation.

2. But the main purport of this third movement is to

show the result of Katharine's training, namely, the destruction of her foible — of her subjective delusion. A severe test is given; a wager is laid upon her disobedience. But she is completely altered in character; as wives, she and Bianca have, relatively at least, changed places; the one who was the most wild and unruly now shows herself the most submissive and obedient. She easily wins the wager for her husband, and excites the surprise of the company. But, not only is she ready to manifest her obedience, she is also able to state its grounds, and to enforce them with eloquence; thus she concludes by a long lecture on the relation of husband and wife, and the paramount duty of obedience on the part of the latter. Hence it is to be supposed that she is convinced, as well as subdued; to her conviction also she is capable of giving a theoretical statement. Her doctrine has never found many admirers among her own sex.

It will be seen that the element of ~~Intrigue, of Situation, predominates in this play~~, and its instrumentality is Disguise. The Romanic origin and coloring are observable in the Italian names, scenery, location, manners—in its Italian form generally. But the Teutonic element of character also makes a beginning. It is, however, rude and simple; it does not show the fine and detailed portraiture which will hereafter be developed; there is a single dominant trait without relief. The product is unripe and uncouth in some respects, yet at the bottom the procedure is true—the retribution of the deed is the fundamental principle. The conviction and the method of the Master thus peer out in his earliest works.

The present play is usually criticised as if Katherine and Petruchio were its sole leading parts; this is a perversion

if the preceding views are correct; the action rests more upon external disguise than upon character. Nor can the many historical questions which have sprung up in reference to this drama be discussed here. There has always been some tendency to ascribe its two different threads to different authors, but such an opinion, perhaps, only intends to lay stress upon the diversity already mentioned. Now, Shakespeare is capable of writing Comedy of Situation, as well as Comedy of Character; in fact, he employs both in nearly every one of his comedies. The recent results obtained from the application of the so-called metrical tests have not changed the state of the argument. But the question whether it was written — wholly, partially, or not at all — by Shakespeare, is a matter of minor importance; the play remains exactly the same; hence a just criticism of it, as a whole, could not be changed by changing its authorship. There it stands in the book, there it belongs, and there it will remain, for it is an organic link in that series called the works of William Shakespeare.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

The Pure Comedies of Shakespeare are those plays in which there is no tragic or serious thread, and in which there is found no transition to an ideal world in order to heal the conflicts of society. Everything takes place in the ordinary manner, ~~and in the customary locality~~; the solid ground of reality is never abandoned; the mediation is effected within the same realm in which the struggle arose. Of this class *Twelfth Night* is, without doubt, the most perfect specimen. All the instrumentalities and forms of Comedy are most successfully employed in its action; not only Situation, but also Character, are here seen in their happiest application. There is introduced Natural Resemblance in its truest function; Disguise also appears as an indispensable element. Both Involuntary and Voluntary Comedy of Character have some of their most striking and complete representatives in the present drama. It will thus be seen to sweep quite the entire field of Pure Comedy; in it the Poet has combined all the essential means and effects which he employs in this department; it unites what is elsewhere scattered through several plays. Because it thus makes use of all the comic instrumentalities which have been previously unfolded, it must also place them in their proper relation and subordination; to watch this procedure will be one of the main points of interest.

Nor is the style less perfect than the structure. It

adapts itself with an absolute elasticity to the varying circumstances of the action, though almost the extremes of poetry and prose are touched in the wild, changing phases of the drama. Nowhere has the Poet given to his thoughts a more complete utterance, or expressed his emotions with a fairer, more delicate coloring than in the language of the group of elevated characters. Then we may turn to the mirthful element — it is a world of boundless humor; the earnest purposes of men seem dissolved in one continual round of jollity; the Comic Muse, in her broadest license, sways the hour. The scenes dance before us through all the hues of the rainbow, and with a rapidity which dazzles, and sometimes for a moment confuses, the mind, which is trying to follow the story through its many-tinted mazes. There is no stagnation — not even cessation — of movement; we are whirled through a labyrinth most bright — yet most intricate — in delight, yet in wonder at the prodigal display of humor and poetry. Still, there cannot be said to be any wanton excess, any tropical overloading, of sweets; on the contrary, every part springs from the central thought; every detail grows out of the Whole. This is a main element of its perfect form; there is no straining after superfluous description, no amplification of an unrestrained fancy, but there is, at bottom, a logical rigidity which holds together its most diverse portions. The plastic sense, which carefully trims the wild outgrowth of a luxuriant imagination, is seen at work here on all sides, reducing even the caprices of humor into unity with the governing principle of the work.

We shall now follow the Poet through these manifold appearances, and try to grasp firmly the Protean shapes of the play till they reveal themselves in their fundamen-

tal form. First let us attempt to trace its general outlines. The ethical element in which the entire action moves is the Family, as is the case in most comedies. But here it is the Family manifested in one of its phases, namely, in the emotion which is the forerunner and condition of marriage. This is sexual love. But to the union of the lovers there must be some obstacle, and the chief peculiarity of the present drama is the nature and employment of this obstacle. It is only of one kind — the lack of a reciprocal attachment. Each loves the one who does not requite the affection, but who, in turn, is sighing for another. There is no parent here who interposes his will to nullify the choice of his daughter; there is, in fact, no external obstruction of any kind — the sole difficulty is internal, is placed in the inclinations and feelings of the individual. The theme, therefore, is unrequited love — in its origin, in its conflicts, and in its final pacification; it exhibits the passage from a fruitless and restless passion to its haven of repose in the Family. The necessity of the transition is absolute — it must take place, if not through the first choice, then through the second. But the other side is also present — some fail, through their own folly, to attain the desirable end. To state the matter in its most general form, the action moves from Love unrequited, with its various manifestations, to Love realized in marriage, or excluded from marriage — the different results springing from the logical nature of the different motives of the various characters.

The frame-work of the play will be best understood by ascertaining its movements, and then by analyzing each movement into its component threads, and, finally, by designating the individual characters of each thread. Thus

we penetrate, not only the organization of the work, but we follow its development and mark its transitions. For the Whole is not so much a dead result as a process. Of the three movements, the first is the exposition of the theme; unrequited love will be shown in two essential phases, each of which will be represented by a distinct group of persons. The second movement will portray the complications and conflicts between the manifold purposes of the characters; all the instrumentalities of Comedy are here introduced to bring the ends of the various individuals to their logical conclusion. To the two previous groups a new group is added. This furnishes means for the Solution, which is the third movement. In it the sources of deception are revealed; to all are brought home the results of their conduct—to some, success; to others, failure.

I. 1. The first thread of the first movement is made up of three characters—the Duke, Viola, and Olivia—who, on account of their station in life, and still more on account of the purity and intensity of their passion, may be called the elevated group. They are all worried with a common difficulty—their love is unrequited. The Duke is introduced to us in the full glow of his ardor for Olivia; there is the feeling of restlessness, of changefulness in everything which he says and does; the air of the lorn, hapless lover looks out from every feature. In order to be rocked and soothed in his emotions, he wishes to have himself enveloped in an atmosphere of music; thus he experiences some allayment of that passion which can find no relief through fruition. Music is the utterance of the feelings; it, therefore, becomes, not only the solace, but the symbol, of the internal condition of the soul; its

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poetical significance here should not be left unnoticed. But what is the cause of these passionate throes? The fair Olivia has refused to listen to his suit. Thus the play hurls us at once into its rapid action, and we hear the keynote which will resound through all its future harmony.

The reason which Olivia announces for her refusal is clearly a subterfuge. She says that she is in mourning for a dead brother — which is a good ground for a little delay, but, when she adds that she intends continuing her sorrow for seven years, it is manifest that she is trying to get rid of an unwelcome suitor. The readiness with which she falls in love when the right one comes along shows that her heart, though highly susceptible, cannot admit the Duke. But from this rejection of his advances we must be careful not to draw any conclusion unfavorable to his character. In order to give some justification for Olivia's conduct, it has been maintained that the Duke is unworthy of her; that he resigns himself to a weak and unmanly extravagance in his passion; that, in fine, his love is really no love, but an idle indulgence of fancy and feeling. Thus, however, the symmetry of the work is destroyed, for he is rendered unfit for the hand of Viola, the true heroine of the play. But the language of the Poet certainly gives no foundation for such an opinion; indeed, it directly contravenes what can be shown to be his poetical creed. Love is spontaneous; it is a deep harmony of natures, beyond the ken of the understanding; and, hence, it is very likely to leap forth with fiery energy at first sight. It will not, and often cannot, give a reason — nay, it will frequently contradict and scout every rational consideration; it lies in the emotions, and refuses to be held accountable to intelligence. In a similar man-

ner, dislikes are not to be controlled by logic. There is no use of seeking a reason — there is none. The Duke loves Olivia because he does; Olivia does not love the Duke because she does not; yet there is no ground why they should not come together except the supreme ground. Love may be aided, but must never be controlled by external considerations; its purity is tainted when it yields to any foreign influence. This passion, therefore, is taken for granted by the Poet; it is the god who rules the world with an undisputed sway, and who will not suffer himself to render an account of his likes and dislikes to any superior.

Next comes Viola. She has been shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria, the Duke's dominion, and, as she supposes, has lost her brother by drowning. Thus she is left without her natural protector, but she will show ample ability to take care of herself. The separation here indicated must be noticed, for this brother will hereafter return and play an important part in the drama; he will introduce the element of Natural Resemblance. Viola, on the lonely shore, learns of the Duke and of his fruitless affection; indeed, she has before heard her father mention his name; she resolves at once to enter his service, disguised as a page; what her purpose is she faintly hints. Already we must suppose that the tender passion has budded; Viola requires not even the presence of the Duke — the report of his virtues, and, especially, of his unreciprocated affection, has excited in her breast pity and love. The caprice of emotion is again triumphant; rumor is now sufficient to arouse the sleeping divinity.

Here we have the sole disguise of the play — a woman in the habit of a man. She moves among these groups of

characters — deceiving them — causing them to run after illusions, and to pursue ends which cannot be realized. If anybody should now happen to fall in love with Viola, woeful is the mistake; the hot fervor is only for a mask; the passion dares not go further than the garments. Into all her relations with the people who surround her she introduces confusion, delusion, ridiculous action; they become comic through Situation, whose special instrumentality is here disguise. She will receive retribution — her deception will be punished by involving her in circumstances in which her true nature must be reversed.

Viola is soon observed to be deeply enamored of the Duke, which passion he cannot requite as sexual, since he takes her to be a boy. He is, however, her warm friend; but this is not enough — friendship will not answer her attachment. Clearly it is another case of unrequited love — the tie is not, and cannot be, reciprocal; though both are fired with the sacred flame, her male attire is in the way. Viola is now employed by the Duke to further his previous suit; thus, by a disguise, he is deceived into sending as intercessor the person most interested in defeating his purpose. She goes, but her object is clearly to break up the match, and she makes the wooing of her master ridiculous by her pompous addresses to Olivia. Her own success must be her own despair; love is in conflict with duty, and carries off the palm with ease. Therefore she obeys the behest, but adroitly destroys the purport of her mission. She drops, however, her bombastic style of speech when she sees that there is no danger from Olivia.

The third character may now be considered. It is Olivia, over whom has come a peculiar, yet very unex-

pected, change. No sooner has Viola appeared before the mourning beauty than the latter falls in love with the fair, beardless messenger. Her vows are at once forgotten, her cloistered life is abandoned, and her cold reserve is thawed in the rays of a new sun. She feels the rising passion; she resists for a moment—then she makes a complete surrender. The youth's perfections, with an invisible and subtle stealth, creep in at her eyes, as she herself states the process. She is aware of her inconstancy, and mildly blames fate for the act—we are not masters of ourselves; what is decreed must be. Thus she asserts the absolute supremacy of love—it cannot be withstood; it is destiny. Intelligence cannot control it; the sense of sight is too powerful :

“ Mine eye is too great a flatterer for my mind.”

It is another example of Amor's wild caprice. Most persons would think that the Duke had every advantage over Viola as a suitor, yet the calm and discreet Olivia is captured by the smooth and rubious lip, by the small, shrill, piping voice of one of her own sex. Let those who try to find a reason for her rejection of the Duke in his want of manliness reflect upon this sudden choice, and then read her actual opinion of him :

“ Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;
In voices well divulged, free, learned, and valiant,
And in dimension and in the shape of nature
A gracious person; but yet I cannot love him ”—

Which is reason enough for sending him off, notwithstanding his many worthy qualities. Love is going to be ruled by itself, and only by itself.

Olivia also is the victim of disguise — she is really in love with the male attire which Viola has on. Her passion is comic in the highest degree, since it is directed towards a person of the same sex; its object is a phantom, a delusion. Love is based upon difference of sex between the individuals, while friendship is the emotion of like sexes. Thus not only the Duke but also Olivia are deceived by the disguise of Viola, though in opposite manners; both are misled into a state of feeling incongruous and inconsistent with their true relation to the imaginary youth. The same conclusion must again be drawn concerning Olivia—it is another case of unrequited love. The sympathetic remark of Viola, who is in a similar condition, and, therefore, appreciates the torment, contains a truth the force of which none will deny:

“Poor lady, she were better love a dream.”

Such is the group of elevated characters. All three are, essentially, in the same state of emotion; each one loves, but does not obtain a requital of that love; they fall asunder in their inclinations. The interest now lies in witnessing the means and method whereby this difficulty will be solved. The knot is well stated by Viola:

— “My master loves her dearly;
And I poor monster fond as much on him,
As she mistaken seems to dote on me.”

Such is the preparation as manifested in this group of persons. It is to be observed that their affection is genuine, spontaneous, chaste; there is no ulterior motive—as money, rank, or social position—that taints the purity of their passion. Nor is there any great inequality between

them, which might degrade, or render incongruous, the married relation. Though of similar culture, character, intelligence, and station in life, they still differ in their preferences; given their external surroundings, their love springs up entirely of its own accord — it is wholly internal, self-impelled, self-determining. No reason can be shown why there should not be a requital in each case, except the one supreme reason — want of the emotional element. This is the triumphant caprice of love, whose authority the Poet makes absolute.

Now, such characters have nothing inherently in them which can be called comic to any great degree. But the situation may become decidedly comic; this is the case, at present, by means of the disguise of Viola. She throws everything into confusion; renders the purposes and the passions of the others absurd; makes them the sport of an illusion. The pang of true love unrequited is no laughing matter, even for outsiders — not to mention him who has the iron in his body; but, when it is all for nothing, when the sighs and groans are expended upon a phantom, then it is provocative of the keenest mirth. This thread, therefore, exhibits throughout *Comedy of Situation*, and its instrumentality is *Disguise*. There is nothing in the character of these persons which is very ridiculous; in fact, their portraits are not minutely drawn, for a detailed delineation of their personal peculiarities is not intended — they are mainly representatives of one principle in three different phases. They fall into a comic entanglement through an external means, and not through any fault of their own.

It will also be noticed that these persons speak in elevated language, and with the utmost refinement of thought

and feeling. Their utterances are often highly metaphorical; an atmosphere of the imagination surrounds their movements; their words fall naturally into harmony and meter. The ethereal, poetic element is that in which they move; grossness, sensuality, buffoonery, are banished from their natures; they are always held in a realm of ideal beauty and delicacy. Their rank is high; their culture is proportionate to their position; their intelligence will not suffer them to be victimized by mental delusions and oddities which might reduce them to the level of comic characters. This employment of ~~metrical and other~~ poetical effects is one of the most striking indications of a conscious method on the part of the Dramatist. Such is the first group of persons, who are naturally placed together, on account of common traits, principles, refinement, and social rank.

2. Now comes the second thread of the action, which furnishes the most emphatic contrast, and, at the same time, similarity, to the preceding thread. Love is still the theme, but it no longer appears in its former purity; it is reduced to a means, and is not the supreme end to which the individual sacrifices himself; it is subordinated to an ulterior motive. Thus it is degraded and trampled into the dust, but it avenges itself by turning its abusers into ridicule and destroying their purposes. But also it is now to be manifested in all its possible incongruity; differences in rank, social position, culture, intelligence, enter as elements to broaden the comic outlines. It will thus be seen that love is here pulled down from the lofty ideal position which it has just occupied, and is reduced to the prosaic coarseness and reality of low life, of selfish appetite. From the mistress it becomes the slave. The language

adapts itself with an absolute elasticity to the varying circumstances of the action, though almost the extremes of poetry and prose are touched in the wild, changing phases of the drama. Nowhere has the Poet given to his thoughts a more complete utterance, or expressed his emotions with a fairer, more delicate coloring than in the language of the group of elevated characters. Then we may turn to the mirthful element — it is a world of boundless humor; the earnest purposes of men seem dissolved in one continual round of jollity; the Comic Muse, in her broadest license, sways the hour. The scenes dance before us through all the hues of the rainbow, and with a rapidity which dazzles, and sometimes for a moment confuses, the mind, which is trying to follow the story through its many-tinted mazes. There is no stagnation — not even cessation — of movement; we are whirled through a labyrinth most bright — yet most intricate — in delight, yet in wonder at the prodigal display of humor and poetry. Still, there cannot be said to be any wanton excess, any tropical overloading, of sweets; on the contrary, every part springs from the central thought; every detail grows out of the Whole. This is a main element of its perfect form; there is no straining after superfluous description, no amplification of an unrestrained fancy, but there is, at bottom, a logical rigidity which holds together its most diverse portions. The plastic sense, which carefully trims the wild outgrowth of a luxuriant imagination, is seen at work here on all sides, reducing even the caprices of humor into unity with the governing principle of the work.

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has the egotism of deeming himself courageous. To these qualities is added an ungainliness which almost amounts to deformity. Such are some of the incongruities which the Poet has heaped upon his proposed suit. That such a clown—without intelligence, without decent habits, without personal beauty, without manhood—should entertain the idea of wooing Olivia, makes him comic, and shows that he is controlled by an illusion of his own fancy. But that which caps his absurdities, and causes him to be a fit subject for retribution, is his impure motive; his hope is to redeem a fortune spent in folly, by a wealthy marriage. Thus his love is no love, for it is degraded to a means. It is no disguise which deceives him; the deception lies in his own mind. Still, he is in earnest in the pursuit of his scheme; he really seems to think, or can, at least, be deluded into thinking, that he will obtain the hand of the rich and noble heiress. He is thus an example of Involuntary Comedy of Character. That his passion is not reciprocated by Olivia has been already implied—in fact, it seems quite unknown to her.

The second person of this group, with an unrequited love for Olivia, is Malvolio. He is her servant, hence his station in life is lower than that of Sir Andrew; he has, however, a very solid basis of character, which is wanting to the latter. Malvolio is severe in morals, rigid in the observance of his duty, precise in the formalities of his office—in fine, an excellent steward. But this little authority is for him the world, of which he is the god; self-love is thus his disease, as his mistress says. He is so completely absorbed in his limits that he has no sense of humor, nor any delight in amusing relaxation. Such a man is certain, some time or other, to fall a victim to his

adapts itself with an absolute elasticity to the varying circumstances of the action, though almost the extremes of poetry and prose are touched in the wild, changing phases of the drama. Nowhere has the Poet given to his thoughts a more complete utterance, or expressed his emotions with a fairer, more delicate coloring than in the language of the group of elevated characters. Then we may turn to the mirthful element — it is a world of boundless humor; the earnest purposes of men seem dissolved in one continual round of jollity; the Comic Muse, in her broadest license, sways the hour. The scenes dance before us through all the hues of the rainbow, and with a rapidity which dazzles, and sometimes for a moment confuses, the mind, which is trying to follow the story through its many-tinted mazes. There is no stagnation — not even cessation — of movement; we are whirled through a labyrinth most bright — yet most intricate — in delight, yet in wonder at the prodigal display of humor and poetry. Still, there cannot be said to be any wanton excess, any tropical overloading, of sweets; on the contrary, every part springs from the central thought; every detail grows out of the Whole. This is a main element of its perfect form; there is no straining after superfluous description, no amplification of an unrestrained fancy, but there is, at bottom, a logical rigidity which holds together its most diverse portions. The plastic sense, which carefully trims the wild outgrowth of a luxuriant imagination, is seen at work here on all sides, reducing even the caprices of humor into unity with the governing principle of the work.

We shall now follow the Poet through these manifold appearances, and try to grasp firmly the Protean shapes of the play till they reveal themselves in their fundamen-

ments for nursing the delusions of these two men, and for bringing their infatuation to its necessary conclusion. Here we first come upon Sir Toby Belch — without doubt the most comic portrait in the play. If a generalization were made in order to express the main principle of his character, it would perhaps be — love of fun. All the earnest objects of life are dissolved in his absorbing passion for merriment. Not only is he comic himself, but he tries to make those who are brought into relation with him comic. He fools Aguecheek, in part for the good cheer which is purchased with the latter's money, but chiefly for the delight in seeing him follow a chimerical object. Malvolio's absurd delusions, and the tricks which punish them, are to be traced, directly or indirectly, to Sir Toby. He makes the comedy, and makes it for his own amusement. He is the center around which the merry group turns, though he is not always its most active member; the sport is brought about through him, or for him. He is, to a certain extent, both author and audience; he helps make the fun, and laughs at it, too. He has one strong, predominating appetite — love of drink. This also is in harmony with his character; it increases his jollity, hence he must have his dram; still, his potations are not the cause, but rather the consequence, of his jovial nature. The hilarious condition destroys all the earnest purposes of life; a man is dissolved into a laugh; care and sorrow, as well as business and duty, take their flight; the individual lives only to be naught, and ultimately becomes naught by sacrificing life itself to his appetite. Sir Toby, having cast to the winds serious activity of every kind, very naturally takes another step — he tries to destroy the serious activity of those around

we penetrate, not only the organization of the work, but we follow its development and mark its transitions. For the Whole is not so much a dead result as a process. Of the three movements, the first is the exposition of the theme; unrequited love will be shown in two essential phases, each of which will be represented by a distinct group of persons. The second movement will portray the complications and conflicts between the manifold purposes of the characters; all the instrumentalities of Comedy are here introduced to bring the ends of the various individuals to their logical conclusion. To the two previous groups a new group is added. This furnishes means for the Solution, which is the third movement. In it the sources of deception are revealed; to all are brought home the results of their conduct—to some, success; to others, failure.

I. 1. The first thread of the first movement is made up of three characters—the Duke, Viola, and Olivia—who, on account of their station in life, and still more on account of the purity and intensity of their passion, may be called the elevated group. They are all worried with a common difficulty—their love is unrequited. The Duke is introduced to us in the full glow of his ardor for Olivia; there is the feeling of restlessness, of changefulness in everything which he says and does; the air of the lorn, hapless lover looks out from every feature. In order to be rocked and soothed in his emotions, he wishes to have himself enveloped in an atmosphere of music; thus he experiences some allayment of that passion which can find no relief through fruition. Music is the utterance of the feelings; it, therefore, becomes, not only the solace, but the symbol, of the internal condition of the soul; its

poetical significance here should not be left unnoticed. But what is the cause of these passionate throes? The fair Olivia has refused to listen to his suit. Thus the play hurls us at once into its rapid action, and we hear the keynote which will resound through all its future harmony.

The reason which Olivia announces for her refusal is clearly a subterfuge. She says that she is in mourning for a dead brother — which is a good ground for a little delay, but, when she adds that she intends continuing her sorrow for seven years, it is manifest that she is trying to get rid of an unwelcome suitor. The readiness with which she falls in love when the right one comes along shows that her heart, though highly susceptible, cannot admit the Duke. But from this rejection of his advances we must be careful not to draw any conclusion unfavorable to his character. In order to give some justification for Olivia's conduct, it has been maintained that the Duke is unworthy of her; that he resigns himself to a weak and unmanly extravagance in his passion; that, in fine, his love is really no love, but an idle indulgence of fancy and feeling. Thus, however, the symmetry of the work is destroyed, for he is rendered unfit for the hand of Viola, the true heroine of the play. But the language of the Poet certainly gives no foundation for such an opinion; indeed, it directly contravenes what can be shown to be his poetical creed. Love is spontaneous; it is a deep harmony of natures, beyond the ken of the understanding; and, hence, it is very likely to leap forth with fiery energy at first sight. It will not, and often cannot, give a reason — nay, it will frequently contradict and scout every rational consideration; it lies in the emotions, and refuses to be held accountable to intelligence. In a similar man-

what has been hitherto called Natural Resemblance. But Viola thinks that her brother was lost in the shipwreck; hence the difficulties caused by his appearance lie beyond her knowledge. Up to this point she has held the key of the situation; she is aware that it is her disguise which causes the mistakes and confusion in which the others are involved. She could, therefore, easily solve the difficulty by simply removing its cause. This she will not do; and now a power enters which draws her into the meshes also, for this power lies beyond the horizon of her consciousness. She becomes complicated in the net-work of mistakes by the unexpected appearance of her brother; she is taken for him, and he is taken for her, yet neither is aware of the source of the trouble. It is manifest that no personage of the drama has now the means of solution in his own hand; the action is placed out of the reach of the conscious purpose of everybody. Still, the whole movement must rush on to its harmonious conclusion; the world of entanglement and error will disappear; man cannot rest forever in delusion.

1. The first thread, consisting of the genteel group, may now be glanced at, though its importance is much diminished in this part. The same theme is continued, which, as before stated, is unrequited love, and is pushed to the point of complete separation. The Duke still persists in his suit for the hand of Olivia, employing Viola in the delicate business; but he is always repelled. The glow and purity of his passion are portrayed in the warmest colors; still, it avails naught. Viola also is consumed with her secret flame; she talks with the Duke, and makes a disguised confession of her own state, which, however, he does not seem to understand. This scene, in

which the two unrequited lovers give expression to their feelings, is one of the most perfect gems to be found in Shakespeare; both man and woman here utter their most intense emotions in reference to a hopeless affection. But Viola, when she discovers that Olivia is in love with her, feels deeply conscience-stricken; she sees the wickedness of disguise; she has been the means of exciting in another breast the same passion which is causing her so much tribulation. It is this sympathetic instinct which gives her all the gentleness and delicacy of womanhood, notwithstanding her bold actions; moreover, her end is the true unity in the family—the highest principle of her sex. Thus her daring adds to her nobleness; she will be rewarded for her devotion, but punished for her disguise. Olivia also keeps up her infatuation for the supposed youth, and carries it to the most unreserved declaration of love. Her overtures are, of course, rejected. The three—Viola, Olivia, and the Duke—are thus driven asunder, but the means for uniting them has been already introduced, and is hovering in the distance.

2. Of this second movement, however, the second thread is, by all means, the most fully portrayed, and the most important; it has, as its moving principle, ~~Sir Toby and his group of merry-makers~~. They are gathered in the household of Olivia, who also is not without a love of fun, as is shown by her retention of a clown, and her reproof of Malvolio. It is the hilarious world—the occupation of life is concentrated in the pursuit of amusement. There are, usually, several of them together; the loud laugh rings out in chorus; they live in an atmosphere of song, mirth, and revelry. The chief caterer for them is Maria, who has, at the same time, her own secret object

in view. There will be served up for their delectation two main comic incidents, which will run along side by side through this entire movement. These are the tricking of Malvolio and the duel of Aguecheek. Each of the dupes has a delusion; the delusion is nourished till it drives to excess, and then leads to cure. Let us first take up the case of Malvolio, and trace it through its various stages till he is incarcerated as a madman. For this is the penalty of his act; to woo Olivia was a crazy deed.

(a.) The merry-makers are having a wild carousal in one of the rooms of Olivia's mansion; Maria furnishes the wine for the debauch. In drink, all the sober activities of life are drowned; man dissolves into humor, and resigns himself wholly to the exhilaration of sensual indulgence. Then follows the song, which is about the absent mistress, and whose content is love, though of the less ideal type. The enjoyment turns into a mad carnival of frolic; the singing becomes a Bacchanalian bellowing, which rouses the house. The alert Maria tries to restrain them, but her warning is disregarded; here comes the rigid Malvolio, the enemy of the revelers. He berates them, threatens to turn them out of doors, and Maria herself receives a menace. Thus there arises a conflict between the merry-makers and the steward — between hilarity and austerity. The former will seek to requite Malvolio after their own fashion, by fooling him and making him a subject of unbounded mirth; for no harmful punishment can be inflicted upon him in consistency with his and their character; he is only to be laughed at.

Maria will be the instrument; she possesses the strength of will and the serious purpose, which are somewhat want-

ing to the jolly company relaxed in fun and drink. Besides, she has good reasons for bearing a deep grudge against the steward — he has reproved her, he has threatened her, and has partially displaced her in the confidence of Olivia. Now, this wily waiting-maid has carefully observed his character, and discovered his weakness. Under a sober and puritanical demeanor she has found the time-server; but, above all, she has discerned in him the self-inflated egotist, who imagines that every woman who happens to look on him is in love with him. Upon this basis she works; an obscure epistle is enough to set him crazy; she succeeds completely in making him believe that his mistress entertains a deep passion for his person. Excessive self-love leads to such a delusion; vanity brings its victim to think that the world admires him as much as he admires himself.

But her own purpose must not be forgotten — it is to win Sir Toby. She subserves his amusement, hence he must be placed in a position to see the sport. With him are the merry-makers, whose main duty is now to enjoy the fun; they are all concealed, so as to witness the success of the trick; their malice adds to its piquancy. They are thus the audience of Maria, which must give the cue of laughter to the real audience. The letter is written; Malvolio's imagination is excited by it to the most ridiculous dreaming; its ambiguous expressions he interprets in his own favor without any hesitation. Enough; his vanity is pampered to such a degree that he pursues a chimerical end with a pertinacity which borders on madness. Especially does he menace in his reveries his future relative, Sir Toby, and the jolly company, all of whom are furtively listening with a malicious merriment.

them, which might degrade, or render incongruous, the married relation. Though of similar culture, character, intelligence, and station in life, they still differ in their preferences; given their external surroundings, their love springs up entirely of its own accord — it is wholly internal, self-impelled, self-determining. No reason can be shown why there should not be a requital in each case, except the one supreme reason — want of the emotional element. This is the triumphant caprice of love, whose authority the Poet makes absolute.

Now, such characters have nothing inherently in them which can be called comic to any great degree. But the situation may become decidedly comic; this is the case, at present, by means of the disguise of Viola. She throws everything into confusion; renders the purposes and the passions of the others absurd; makes them the sport of an illusion. The pang of true love unrequited is no laughing matter, even for outsiders — not to mention him who has the iron in his body; but, when it is all for nothing, when the sighs and groans are expended upon a phantom, then it is provocative of the keenest mirth. This thread, therefore, exhibits throughout Comedy of Situation, and its instrumentality is Disguise. There is nothing in the character of these persons which is very ridiculous; in fact, their portraits are not minutely drawn, for a detailed delineation of their personal peculiarities is not intended — they are mainly representatives of one principle in three different phases. They fall into a comic entanglement through an external means, and not through any fault of their own.

It will also be noticed that these persons speak in elevated language, and with the utmost refinement of thought

and feeling. Their utterances are often highly metaphorical; an atmosphere of the imagination surrounds their movements; their words fall naturally into harmony and meter. The ethereal, poetic element is that in which they move; grossness, sensuality, buffoonery, are banished from their natures; they are always held in a realm of ideal beauty and delicacy. Their rank is high; their culture is proportionate to their position; their intelligence will not suffer them to be victimized by mental delusions and oddities which might reduce them to the level of comic characters. This employment of ~~metrical and other~~ poetical effects is one of the most striking indications of a conscious method on the part of the Dramatist. Such is the first group of persons, who are naturally placed together, on account of common traits, principles, refinement, and social rank.

2. Now comes the second thread of the action, which furnishes the most emphatic contrast, and, at the same time, similarity, to the preceding thread. Love is still the theme, but it no longer appears in its former purity; it is reduced to a means, and is not the supreme end to which the individual sacrifices himself; it is subordinated to an ulterior motive. Thus it is degraded and trampled into the dust, but it avenges itself by turning its abusers into ridicule and destroying their purposes. But also it is now to be manifested in all its possible incongruity; differences in rank, social position, culture, intelligence, enter as elements to broaden the comic outlines. It will thus be seen that love is here pulled down from the lofty ideal position which it has just occupied, and is reduced to the prosaic coarseness and reality of low life, of selfish appetite. From the mistress it becomes the slave. The language

introduced, and with it a new principle of entanglement. Resemblance is now the source of error, and throws everything into a new confusion. Just when the duel is about to transpire, Antonio comes along and takes Viola for Sebastian; he interferes to protect his friend, and the foes are parted. But Antonio, who is the enemy of the State, is soon removed by officers, who arrest him. The duel then must be repeated, for Aguecheek is easily misled a second time by his foible. He seeks out Viola again; he rushes up to strike her, but it is Sebastian now — a man; this man strikes back, and seems ready to fight the whole group of merry-makers. Thus the deceivers are deceived by the similitude — the jolly company is itself victimized. But the greatest mistake is that of Olivia, who enters just at the critical moment, takes her supposed lover away, and, after many caresses, brings the priest and marries the stranger on the spot. Well may Sebastian think that this world is a dream, and find it impossible to reconcile his senses with his understanding. All are involved in one common delusion — the merry group, the genteel group, and the new-comers. No single individual has now the means of untying the knot, or a knowledge of the cause of the difficulty; an external power seems to be determining the destiny of everybody according to some hidden caprice. But the rational nature of man will not repose in an irrational maze; it will push him to discover the source of the trouble, and to disperse the obscurity. So we are ready for a rapid unwinding of the clew; in other words, the Solution can now be given.

III. This is the third movement, which will clear up the world of delusion. Both kinds of deception, the external and the internal, will be brought to day-light;

has the egotism of deeming himself courageous. To these qualities is added an ~~ungainliness~~ which almost amounts to deformity. Such are some of the incongruities which the Poet has heaped upon his proposed suit. That such a clown — without intelligence, without decent habits, without personal beauty, without manhood — should entertain the idea of wooing Olivia, makes him comic, and shows that he is controlled by an illusion of his own fancy. But that which caps his absurdities, and causes him to be a fit subject for retribution, is his impure motive; his hope is to redeem a fortune spent in folly, by a wealthy marriage. Thus his love is no love, for it is degraded to a means. ~~It~~ is no disguise which deceives him; the deception lies in his own mind. Still, he is in earnest in the pursuit of his scheme; he really seems to think, or can, at least, be deluded into thinking, that he will obtain the hand of the rich and noble heiress. He is thus an example of Involuntary Comedy of Character. That his passion is not reciprocated by Olivia has been already implied — in fact, it seems quite unknown to her.

The second person of this group, with an unrequited love for Olivia, is ~~Malvolio~~. He is her servant, hence his station in life is lower than that of Sir Andrew; he has, however, a very solid basis of character, which is wanting to the latter. Malvolio is ~~severe in morals~~, rigid in the observance of his duty, precise in the formalities of his office — in fine, an excellent steward. But this little authority is for him the world, of which he is the god; self-love is thus his disease, as his mistress says. He is so completely absorbed in his limits that he has no sense of humor, nor any delight in amusing relaxation. Such a man is certain, some time or other, to fall a victim to his

passion. Olivia transfers her heart with equal readiness to the brother; she is right also; hitherto she loved a dream, for which a reality is now substituted; she would indeed be a fool to prefer shadow to substance. The change of persons must result from unrequited love; devotion to the one individual is beautiful and noble, but devotion to the Family is the higher principle. The transfer of love, therefore, must be made in such a case; the institution of marriage cannot be destroyed by a single fruitless passion. In effecting the change the question of time would seem to be of some importance, though Shakespeare repeatedly makes it very sudden. Such is the solution of this grand problem of love unrequited, yet pure. The essential element is the reciprocal emotion, which, if the first person will not grant, the second person must be sought, for the Family—the great end and fruition of the sexual relation—demands mutuality of devotion and affection.

2. Passing to the low characters, we observe that their ends are made to vanish into nothing before their very eyes, and they are punished in addition. Augecheek and Malvolio have both suffered in body, besides losing their suit; their love, though unrequited, was impure, being determined by motives alien to its nature; indeed, it was not love at all. Their object was absurd and nugatory from the beginning; the absurdity is now realized in the form of ridiculous failure. Sir Toby, too, is caught on his weak side; his insatiate love of jollity has forced him to become the thrall of the person who can furnish sport with the greatest success—this is the astute little witch, Maria, whom he now marries. He has already declared his subjection and the ground of it, when she wheedles

Malvolio with the forged letter; in his exultation he says, "I could marry this wench for this device," and he urges her, "set thy foot upon my neck," in manifest token of submission. So his absurd end, too, has brought along its penalty. "And thus the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges," as the Clown says, applying the principle of retribution to Malvolio — which principle, however, is of general application.

As we said in the beginning, this play is the richest and completest product of Shakespeare's Muse within the realm of Pure Comedy. The stiff conventionality, as well as the crude exaggeration, of his earlier figures are no longer seen; character in its fullness, symmetry, and completeness is manifested in every person. But the Romantic element is still here, with its coloring, with its locality, even with its names; along side of it, too, is found the Teutonic element, with its peculiarities. To speak more definitely, the one group seems Italian, the other English. But the two sides do not fall asunder, as is the tendency in some of the Poet's works; on the contrary, both are blended together in a perfect and harmonious unity. Movement and characterization could not be more completely transfused in one action. Rapidity does not make it superficial; abundance does not make it heavy. Thus the elements of his comic genius now reach their happiest combination. Moreover, this play sums up and includes all the essential principles of his previous comedies, both as regards Situation and Character. It has Natural Resemblance, which was found to be the sole instrumentality of *Comedy of Errors*; it has also Disguise, which was stated to be the chief instrumentality in *Taming of the Shrew*. In addition to these principles, it

has also the two leading phases of Comedy of Character—the voluntary and involuntary. Thus the arch of Pure Comedy is completely spanned—its possible forms are exhausted. Still, there may be many different kinds of collisions in which one or more of these instrumentalities can be employed.

which the two unrequited lovers give expression to their feelings, is one of the most perfect gems to be found in Shakespeare; both man and woman here utter their most intense emotions in reference to a hopeless affection. But Viola, when she discovers that Olivia is in love with her, feels deeply conscience-stricken; she sees the wickedness of disguise; she has been the means of exciting in another breast the same passion which is causing her so much tribulation. It is this sympathetic instinct which gives her all the gentleness and delicacy of womanhood, notwithstanding her bold actions; moreover, her end is the true unity in the family—the highest principle of her sex. Thus her daring adds to her nobleness; she will be rewarded for her devotion, but punished for her disguise. Olivia also keeps up her infatuation for the supposed youth, and carries it to the most unreserved declaration of love. Her overtures are, of course, rejected. The three—Viola, Olivia, and the Duke—are thus driven asunder, but the means for uniting them has been already introduced, and is hovering in the distance.

2. Of this second movement, however, the second thread is, by all means, the most fully portrayed, and the most important; it has, as its moving principle, ~~Sir Toby and his group of merry-makers~~. They are gathered in the household of Olivia, who also is not without a love of fun, as is shown by her retention of a clown, and her reproof of Malvolio. It is the hilarious world—the occupation of life is concentrated in the pursuit of amusement. There are, usually, several of them together; the loud laugh rings out in chorus; they live in an atmosphere of song, mirth, and revelry. The chief caterer for them is Maria, who has, at the same time, her own secret object

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(a.) The merry-makers are having a wild carousal in one of the rooms of *Olivia's* mansion; *Maria* furnishes the wine for the debauch. In drink, all the sober activities of life are drowned; man dissolves into humor, and resigns himself wholly to the exhilaration of sensual indulgence. Then follows the song, which is about the absent mistress, and whose content is love, though of the less ideal type. The enjoyment turns into a mad carnival of frolic; the singing becomes a Bacchanalian bellowing, which rouses the house. The alert *Maria* tries to restrain them, but her warning is disregarded; here comes the rigid *Malvolio*, the enemy of the revelers. He berates them, threatens to turn them out of doors, and *Maria* herself receives a menace. Thus there arises a conflict between the merry-makers and the steward — between hilarity and austerity. The former will seek to requite *Malvolio* after their own fashion, by fooling him and making him a subject of unbounded mirth; for no harmful punishment can be inflicted upon him in consistency with his and their character; he is only to be laughed at.

Maria will be the instrument; she possesses the strength of will and the serious purpose, which are somewhat want-

the number of the revelers ; a large company seems merrier than a few scattered persons.

The Clown, too, must be classed in this group, though he sustains a general relation to the whole of the play. His main duty is to reflect the conduct of all the characters and to exhibit, in sly sallies, their weakness and folly. His thrusts reach everybody — Olivia, the Duke, the revelers, are mirrored and criticised in his disguised satire.

X Often, however, he merely seeks to divert, and “ observes the mood on whom he jests ” — sometimes humorous, yet sometimes sympathetic. He is fully conscious of his purpose, and repeatedly intimates that it requires a wise man to play his part ; the same point is noticed by Viola, in whose mouth the Poet seems to put his view of the function of the Fool. The earnest ends of the elevated characters must be shown by him in their inadequacy and finitude ; at his glance they manifest their limitations ; he is, therefore, the embodiment of humor, though he may have himself serious purposes beneath his merriest jests. He belongs to Voluntary Comedy of Character, since he both knows and wills his comic action.

II. Such is the organization of the various elements in the first movement of the play ; we next can pass to witness them in action, in complication, in conflict. This will bring us to the second movement, for which ample preparation has now been made. The previous threads will be continued, but another one will be added — that of Sebastian and his friend, Antonio. Sebastian is Viola's brother, whom she exactly resembles in her disguise. Thus a new comic instrumentality belonging to Comedy of Situation is introduced, and into the former complications is brought a deeper intricacy. This new principle is

what has been hitherto called Natural Resemblance. But Viola thinks that her brother was lost in the shipwreck; hence the difficulties caused by his appearance lie beyond her knowledge. Up to this point she has held the key of the situation; she is aware that it is her disguise which causes the mistakes and confusion in which the others are involved. She could, therefore, easily solve the difficulty by simply removing its cause. This she will not do; and now a power enters which draws her into the meshes also, for this power lies beyond the horizon of her consciousness. She becomes complicated in the net-work of mistakes by the unexpected appearance of her brother; she is taken for him, and he is taken for her, yet neither is aware of the source of the trouble. It is manifest that no personage of the drama has now the means of solution in his own hand; the action is placed out of the reach of the conscious purpose of everybody. Still, the whole movement must rush on to its harmonious conclusion; the world of entanglement and error will disappear; man cannot rest forever in delusion.

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2. Of this second movement, however, the second thread is, by all means, the most fully portrayed, and the most important; it has, as its moving principle, ~~Sir Toby and his group of merry-makers~~. They are gathered in the household of Olivia, who also is not without a love of fun, as is shown by her retention of a clown, and her reproof of Malvolio. It is the hilarious world—the occupation of life is concentrated in the pursuit of amusement. There are, usually, several of them together; the loud laugh rings out in chorus; they live in an atmosphere of song, mirth, and revelry. The chief caterer for them is Maria, who has, at the same time, her own secret object

in view. There will be served up for their delectation two main comic incidents, which will run along side by side through this entire movement. These are the tricking of Malvolio and the duel of Aguecheek. Each of the dupes has a delusion; the delusion is nourished till it drives to excess, and then leads to cure. Let us first take up the case of Malvolio, and trace it through its various stages till he is incarcerated as a madman. For this is the penalty of his act; to woo Olivia was a crazy deed.

(a.) The merry-makers are having a wild carousal in one of the rooms of Olivia's mansion; Maria furnishes the wine for the debauch. In drink, all the sober activities of life are drowned; man dissolves into humor, and resigns himself wholly to the exhilaration of sensual indulgence. Then follows the song, which is about the absent mistress, and whose content is love, though of the less ideal type. The enjoyment turns into a mad carnival of frolic; the singing becomes a Bacchanalian bellowing, which rouses the house. The alert Maria tries to restrain them, but her warning is disregarded; here comes the rigid Malvolio, the enemy of the revelers. He berates them, threatens to turn them out of doors, and Maria herself receives a menace. Thus there arises a conflict between the merry-makers and the steward — between hilarity and austerity. The former will seek to requite Malvolio after their own fashion, by fooling him and making him a subject of unbounded mirth; for no harmful punishment can be inflicted upon him in consistency with his and their character; he is only to be laughed at.

Maria will be the instrument; she possesses the strength of will and the serious purpose, which are somewhat want-

ing to the jolly company relaxed in fun and drink. Besides, she has good reasons for bearing a deep grudge against the steward — he has reproved her, he has threatened her, and has partially displaced her in the confidence of Olivia. Now, this wily waiting-maid has carefully observed his character, and discovered his weakness. Under a sober and puritanical demeanor she has found the time-server; but, above all, she has discerned in him the self-inflated egotist, who imagines that every woman who happens to look on him is in love with him. Upon this basis she works; an obscure epistle is enough to set him crazy; she succeeds completely in making him believe that his mistress entertains a deep passion for his person. Excessive self-love leads to such a delusion; vanity brings its victim to think that the world admires him as much as he admires himself.

But her own purpose must not be forgotten — it is to win Sir Toby. She subserves his amusement, hence he must be placed in a position to see the sport. With him are the merry-makers, whose main duty is now to enjoy the fun; they are all concealed, so as to witness the success of the trick; their malice adds to its piquancy. They are thus the audience of Maria, which must give the cue of laughter to the real audience. The letter is written; Malvolio's imagination is excited by it to the most ridiculous dreaming; its ambiguous expressions he interprets in his own favor without any hesitation. Enough; his vanity is pampered to such a degree that he pursues a chimerical end with a pertinacity which borders on madness. Especially does he menace in his reveries his future relative, Sir Toby, and the jolly company, all of whom are furtively listening with a malicious merriment.

To complete his act of folly, he next appears before Olivia in a costume which she abominates — cross-gartered and in yellow stockings. He found this suggestion also in the letter. He smirks, and fawns, and cites from the epistle; Olivia is amazed, though she has been prepared by Maria, who had told her he had gone crazy; her conclusion also is that “this is very midsummer madness.” Malvolio is now handed over to the torment of his enemies, the revelers, who have no longer any obstacle to their revenge. He is treated like a madman; Sir Toby addresses the Devil in him — then orders him to be put in a dark room and bound. The Clown, too, feigns the curate, who also seeks to cast out the fiend. Their object is to make the deluded victim himself believe that he is mad, and, hence, he is confounded by all sorts of mad things which are told him. He begs for release, but there is no help. The character of this retribution is manifest — Malvolio’s end was absurd, though he remains rational to the last; it was a crazy thought to mistake confidence in a servant for love. He is, therefore, treated to his own action — the group of merry-makers brings home to him the inherent nature of his deed.

(b.) The other leading incident of this second thread is the duel of Aguecheek, who is possessed of a delusion which makes him a fit subject for trickery and sport. He also is one of the suitors of Olivia; he has been doubtful of success all along, but the encouragement of Sir Toby has kept up his spirits. He has observed, at a distance, how readily Olivia grants her favors to the disguised Viola (Cesario); now he is thoroughly disheartened, and he is going to leave at once. But his delusion is that he possesses courage; hence a challenge sent to his supposed

rival is the means for making him remain. Olivia, too, will thus be won, it is argued, as the report of valor is all-prevailing with woman. Off he goes to write the challenge. Now, the comic force of this incident lies in the fact that both are not fighters. Sir Andrew is a coward and Cesario is a woman. They are thus placed in a situation which makes their action ridiculous — they are forced to appear what they are not, and cannot be, and everybody knows of the incongruity. The contradiction is attempted to be carried out, though the duel means that life is subordinate to honor, which principle neither possesses.

The combatants are brought together; the scheme of the merry-makers is to cause each one to believe that his opponent is just what he is not, namely, a man of courage. Thus both are frightened at an unreal goblin, and a comic retribution has visited their false pretensions. For each is making some untrue claim — the one through disguise of character, the other through disguise of sex. Ague-cheek pretends to possess valor; he is forced to show it, or reveal his natural cowardice. He started the duel by appealing to what he had not — the nullity of his purpose is fully shown. On the other hand, Viola meets with a punishment; she has taken the garb of a man — she must assume the responsibility of a man. She learns that disguise is dangerous; beneath her male attire sex and character are compelled to appear; deception cannot be permanent. The incongruity between her outward appearance and her real nature is the comic element; her plan nullifies itself. The Poet has here punished Disguise, and he will continue to involve Viola in complications till she is compelled to reveal herself.

3. With the interruption of the duel the third thread is

introduced, and with it a new principle of entanglement. Resemblance is now the source of error, and throws everything into a new confusion. Just when the duel is about to transpire, Antonio comes along and takes Viola for Sebastian; he interferes to protect his friend, and the foes are parted. But Antonio, who is the enemy of the State, is soon removed by officers, who arrest him. The duel then must be repeated, for Aguecheek is easily misled a second time by his foible. He seeks out Viola again; he rushes up to strike her, but it is Sebastian now — a man; this man strikes back, and seems ready to fight the whole group of merry-makers. Thus the deceivers are deceived by the similitude — the jolly company is itself victimized. But the greatest mistake is that of Olivia, who enters just at the critical moment, takes her supposed lover away, and, after many caresses, brings the priest and marries the stranger on the spot. Well may Sebastian think that this world is a dream, and find it impossible to reconcile his senses with his understanding. All are involved in one common delusion — the merry group, the genteel group, and the new-comers. No single individual has now the means of untying the knot, or a knowledge of the cause of the difficulty; an external power seems to be determining the destiny of everybody according to some hidden caprice. But the rational nature of man will not repose in an irrational maze; it will push him to discover the source of the trouble, and to disperse the obscurity. So we are ready for a rapid unwinding of the clew; in other words, the Solution can now be given.

III. This is the third movement, which will clear up the world of delusion. Both kinds of deception, the external and the internal, will be brought to day-light;

rival is the means for making him remain. Olivia, too, will thus be won, it is argued, as the report of valor is all-prevailing with woman. Off he goes to write the challenge. Now, the comic force of this incident lies in the fact that both are not fighters. Sir Andrew is a coward and Cesario is a woman. They are thus placed in a situation which makes their action ridiculous — they are forced to appear what they are not, and cannot be, and everybody knows of the incongruity. The contradiction is attempted to be carried out, though the duel means that life is subordinate to honor, which principle neither possesses.

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3. With the interruption of the duel the third thread is

passion. Olivia transfers her heart with equal readiness to the brother; she is right also; hitherto she loved a dream, for which a reality is now substituted; she would indeed be a fool to prefer shadow to substance. The change of persons must result from unrequited love; devotion to the one individual is beautiful and noble, but devotion to the Family is the higher principle. The transfer of love, therefore, must be made in such a case; the institution of marriage cannot be destroyed by a single fruitless passion. In effecting the change the question of time would seem to be of some importance, though Shakespeare repeatedly makes it very sudden. Such is the solution of this grand problem of love unrequited, yet pure. The essential element is the reciprocal emotion, the second great end and mutuality of

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the necessary outcome of the ends of the various persons will be manifest, even to these persons themselves—that is, the plot, which has hitherto been plain enough to the audience, will now explain itself to itself, and thus round off its action to completeness.

2. To begin with the general group, we observe that its difficulty springs from a disguise and a resemblance, both of which must now be revealed. Antonio, friend of Sebastiano, is brought a prisoner before the Duke; he there sees Viola, and at once claims fellowship, which she of course denies. Then Olivia enters and claims marriage, which relation also Viola denies. But the fact is, seemingly, proved against her by the best possible witness, namely, the officiating priest. Poor Viola indeed found out that disguise was dangerous, and even threatened with death by the Duke. Sebastiano, her brother, who is also a prisoner, is at once the resemblance discovered. Viola reveals her assumed name, and all is explained. The drama now is a comedy, and is so to everybody. The result is a happy ending, and the play is over.

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Coming to the low characters, we observe that their passions are made to vanish into nothing before their very objects: they are punished in addition. Augecheek and Maria have both suffered in body, besides losing their hearts: their love, though unrequited, was impure, being determined by motives alien to its nature; indeed, it was not love at all. Their object was absurd and nugatory from the beginning; the absurdity is now realized in the form of ridiculous failure. Sir Toby, too, is caught on his weak side; his insatiate love of jollity has forced him to become the thrall of the person who can furnish sport with the greatest success—this is the astute little witch, Maria, whom he now marries. He has already declared his subjection and the ground of it, when she wheedles

the necessary outcome of the ends of the various persons will be manifest, even to these persons themselves — that is, the play, which has hitherto been plain enough to the audience, will now explain itself to itself, and thus round off its action to completeness.

1. To begin with the genteel group, we observe that its difficulty springs from a disguise and a resemblance, both of which must now be revealed. Antonio, friend of Sebastian, is brought a prisoner before the Duke; he there sees Viola, and at once claims fellowship, which claim she of course denies. Then Olivia appears and claims marriage, which relation also Viola denies. But the fact is, seemingly, proved against her by the best possible witness, namely, the officiating priest. Poor Viola has indeed found out that disguises are dangerous; she is even threatened with death by the angry Duke. But here comes Sebastian, her brother; the two are brought side by side — at once the resemblance is discovered. Lastly, Viola reveals her assumed attire — all the mysterious events of the drama now become transparent; everything is clear to everybody. The two comic instrumentalities — Natural Resemblance and Disguise — have fulfilled their function.

But the result is awaited for with breathless attention. What will be the outcome of this triple unrequited love? Some one must bend or break; all cannot be satisfied. It is a surprising, and to a few, perhaps, a shocking, incident — both the Duke and Olivia change individuals on the spot; Viola alone obtains the first reward of love. The Duke readily shifts his affection to his disguised page; he is right; he must find requital and come to repose; he cannot forever be torn to pieces by his furious,

passion. Olivia transfers her heart with equal readiness to the brother; she is right also; hitherto she loved a dream, for which a reality is now substituted; she would indeed be a fool to prefer shadow to substance. The change of persons must result from unrequited love; devotion to the one individual is beautiful and noble, but devotion to the Family is the higher principle. The transfer of love, therefore, must be made in such a case; the institution of marriage cannot be destroyed by a single fruitless passion. In effecting the change the question of time would seem to be of some importance, though Shakespeare repeatedly makes it very sudden. Such is the solution of this grand problem of love unrequited, yet pure. The essential element is the reciprocal emotion, which, if the first person will not grant, the second person must be sought, for the Family—the great end and fruition of the sexual relation—demands mutuality of devotion and affection.

2. Passing to the low characters, we observe that their ends are made to vanish into nothing before their very eyes, and they are punished in addition. Augecheek and Malvolio have both suffered in body, besides losing their suit; their love, though unrequited, was impure, being determined by motives alien to its nature; indeed, it was not love at all. Their object was absurd and nugatory from the beginning; the absurdity is now realized in the form of ridiculous failure. Sir Toby, too, is caught on his weak side; his insatiate love of jollity has forced him to become the thrall of the person who can furnish sport with the greatest success—this is the astute little witch, Maria, whom he now marries. He has already declared his subjection and the ground of it, when she wheedles

Malvolio with the forged letter; in his exultation he says, "I could marry this wench for this device," and he urges her, "set thy foot upon my neck," in manifest token of submission. So his absurd end, too, has brought along its penalty. "And thus the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges," as the Clown says, applying the principle of retribution to Malvolio — which principle, however, is of general application.

As we said in the beginning, this play is the richest and completest product of Shakespeare's Muse within the realm of Pure Comedy. The stiff conventionality, as well as the crude exaggeration, of his earlier figures are no longer seen; character in its fullness, symmetry, and completeness is manifested in every person. But the Romantic element is still here, with its coloring, with its locality, even with its names; along side of it, too, is found the Teutonic element, with its peculiarities. To speak more definitely, the one group seems Italian, the other English. But the two sides do not fall asunder, as is the tendency in some of the Poet's works; on the contrary, both are blended together in a perfect and harmonious unity. Movement and characterization could not be more completely transfused in one action. Rapidity does not make it superficial; abundance does not make it heavy. Thus the elements of his comic genius now reach their happiest combination. Moreover, this play sums up and includes all the essential principles of his previous comedies, both as regards Situation and Character. It has Natural Resemblance, which was found to be the sole instrumentality of *Comedy of Errors*; it has also Disguise, which was stated to be the chief instrumentality in *Taming of the Shrew*. In addition to these principles, it

has also the two leading phases of Comedy of Character—the voluntary and involuntary. Thus the arch of Pure Comedy is completely spanned—its possible forms are exhausted. Still, there may be many different kinds of collisions in which one or more of these instrumentalities can be employed.

LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST.

We now pass to a play which, in its most important aspect, is quite the opposite of the one which was last considered. *Twelfth Night* is the most perfect comedy written by Shakespeare — viewed from the stand-point of organization — while just the contrary must be asserted of *Love's Labor's Lost*. There is no scaffolding here which adequately supports the entire work; there is no intrigue which gives a backbone to the whole action and makes it a complete unity. It lies before us, to a certain extent, divided into pieces, which are not fully articulated. It is like the less perfect animals which may be separated into parts and each part will still remain an animal. It has disguises and concealments, but none which run through and hold together the entire plot. "A story it has, undoubtedly, but a story to which precisely the same objections apply. Those of the Poet's readers who find as much delight in the structure of his dramas as in their other great qualities must now expect some disappointment.

So much may be said about its organization, which pertains to the proper employment of dramatic instrumentalities. Still, there is a central thought which controls the work, though often in a very remote and capricious manner. Other merits, too, of a high order must be acknowledged. Characters are drawn with definiteness, though frequently with some extravagance — in fact, the play is thoroughly a comedy of character, and is defective in the element of

Situation ; hence its frame-work is so inadequate. Its coloring is that of unbounded, uncontrollable caprice, which scouts all propriety — even artistic propriety ; it bubbles over with puns, conceits, whimsicalities, of every description and under all circumstances ; it is a wilderness of jokes and humors. The reader is not expected to be able to keep his face straight for any length of time, and, if the scene momentarily wears a sober look, it is felt to be preparatory to an effervescence. The youthful author shows here his most wanton mood ; it is as if he were trying to leap out of his skin from pure mirthfulness. Still, it is worth our trouble to see how far the thought shines through this somewhat tangled mass of dramatic luxuriance, even though we sometimes have to force what is dim into a little stronger light than either the strict language or the immediate connection of the passage may warrant.

It is manifest that the drama mainly springs from a collision of love. But the form of this collision is novel ; a new obstacle is introduced — study undertakes to suppress, and, hence, conflicts with, love. The latter is supposed to be an ancient enemy of learning ; it distracts the attention, stirs up the passions, muddles the brain. Thus the two hostile powers grapple ; the course of the play will show that love is not only triumphant against the pursuit of erudition and philosophy, but also punishes its contemners by a torture peculiar to itself, namely, loss of immediate fruition. Such is unquestionably the leading thread of the drama, supported by the group of elevated characters. But another element must not be omitted ; the reverse side of mere erudition is shown when it is not tempered by love, or some other corrective — it makes men comic ; they become learned fools. So, from this point of view,

study may be said to be triumphant in its one-sided pursuit—triumphant in producing pedants. Hence the complete statement of the work must exhibit the conflict of these two principles, each of which is victorious, though in different groups of characters.

The play will be most easily grasped by dividing it into three movements. The first represents the conflict—love is in a struggle with study, and is not only victorious in this one case, but also in other relations which are introduced. The second is the mutual revelation of the secret passion; its triumph is acknowledged, and even defended; the oath of asceticism is openly violated, and the violation is supported by all. Here, in particular, the comic effect of the purely studious life is brought in; it results in pedantic folly. The third movement has, in general, the nature of retribution; the higher group are teased, tricked, and cajoled by the ladies—are beaten at their own game of intellectual dexterity, and are deferred in their hopes for a year, with some additional penalties. The lower group have their erudition reduced to a comic nullity in the ridiculous farce of the Nine Worthies.

I. The play opens with the fundamental point—the King has resolved to devote himself for three years to study and contemplation, and for that purpose has drawn up some rigid rules which are to govern him and his associates. His motive is to make his court as celebrated as the ancient Academe—to cause Navarre, his kingdom, to be the wonder of the world, and to have his own name live in future ages. Still, we must not say that the pursuit of fame constitutes the thought of the work; such a statement is altogether too vague and incomplete; the emphatic point here is: The pursuit of learning, as the

channel through which ambition is gratified, collides with love. Besides other less important regulations whose object is to enforce abstinence, the main one can be at once given — the complete renunciation of the society of women. Here is the pivot upon which the whole action turns. The ethical basis, too, should not be forgotten — man, in the execution of his plans, abjures the ~~Family~~; the latter, however, as an institution, must prove itself the more powerful through its emotion, namely, love. Thus the play moves from love violated by study to love triumphant over a one-sided life of erudition.

The three associates of the King give their assent, and their scheme is ready for a beginning. But there is one of their number, called Biron, who has some objections to these austere conditions. He wants to study, yet he desires to enjoy the world at the same time; indeed, he very clearly sees and states the insufficiency of mere learning — his doctrine is that men may grow blind intellectually by reading; thus he prepares us for the pedants. But particularly that clause, “not to see a woman,” is offensive to him; the god of love rules the world; he knows that he cannot resist a divinity, and that the others can just as little; he, therefore, prophesies the speedy perjury of the whole company if they take such an oath. In fact, the plan is clearly impossible, for already the French monarch's daughter, with three attendant ladies, is at the gates on an embassy, and must be received by the King. But Biron is not the person to stand back; he swears observance to the regulations, though manifestly the entire scheme is against his judgment.

1. Thus the conflict opens. Ascetic life undertakes to suppress all desire and passion, and, to make it effective,

the supreme ruler of the State enforces it by penalties for violation. But what is this violation which the Poet at once thrusts before our eyes? The scene cannot be told in its details to the reader; suffice it to say that already one of the rigid injunctions has been set flagrantly at naught within the very limits of the "little Academe," and the guilty couple, Costard and Jaquenetta, are brought into the presence of the King. Here we behold the revolt of nature, in its rudest form, against the ascetic ordinance; passion, on its purely animal side, is introduced, in all its nakedness, to show one of the Titanic forces with which the realm of discipline has to contend. Love without its ethical element, as mere natural impulse, has thus assailed this student-world at its very origin. While vindicating the thought of this transition, we must confess that the descent is very great and very sudden—that it gives us an uncomfortable jolt through every member. The figures here are almost too repulsive to be comic—especially Jaquenetta, for so the weaker vessel is called, is a female character whose contemplation affords little pleasure of an æsthetic kind. Such is the primitive phase of the conflict between love and study.

The next manifestation of this blind, yet unavoidable, power will be seen in the case of Don Armado.—Every reader is at once reminded of Don Quixote, the outlines of whose character are quite the same. He has been a man of extensive travel; he has had good opportunities for culture, and has seen well-bred society; but all his gifts and acquirements are blasted by his vanity—vanity in its literal sense of emptiness. That is, he has no content to his life. His manners are, therefore, ridiculous in

their formality; his thoughts fall into the wildest extravagance; his conduct has the single attribute of empty pomposity. Now, when such a person comes to write or to talk, we must expect the same characteristics—it will be a burlesque on all sensible writing and talking. Don Armado possesses imagination, but it is an imagination which flies through the universe because of its emptiness. He has the gift of language, whose excess, however, chokes its own purport. Still, he lays stress upon his learning, and contrasts himself with Costard, who is unlettered; but his education has made him only the greater fool. To bring his grandiose pretensions into a more striking light, to him is given, as a companion, Moth—who is short in stature, but keen in understanding—who at once reduces to absurdity his thrasonical action and language. Thus Moth is a kind of clown, who consciously burlesques the manner and expressions of his master.

But to make this Don Armado a constituent part of the play he must be shown in love. The maiden for whom his heart is in flames is Jaquenetta, whose career has been hitherto touched upon very lightly. Her ethical violation appears to be no obstacle at all; chastity is for him an unnecessary element of love, if he be judged by his action. He is thus reduced to a level with Costard—indeed, below the latter, who is at least the first lover, if we leave out of account a doubtful passage towards the end of the play. Now, does this act spring from his character? Don Armado was before declared to be without content to life; he has no true, substantial existence; hence he does not possess the ethical element, though he is not a villain. His emptiness will account for this

seemingly strange freak ; though void of everything else, he will be provided by nature with physical passion ; the combination of these two elements will bring him to relish such an unsavory piece of flesh as Jaquenetta. Hence this relation is consistent with his character, but it is, nevertheless, offensive, especially as Don Armado has done nothing for which he should receive such a punishment. In his delusions he is wholly unconscious, and affects us with a touch of sympathy, though he may not know the poetical wrong done to him.

Such is the low group of comic characters belonging to the first movement ; they represent, in general, the triumph of love in its sensual phase. Costard is an ignorant boor, while Don Armado is a cultivated fantastic ; though so different in other respects, both agree in their fundamental relation to the play — they represent passion in its natural impulse, without its ethical basis. We may now turn to the group of elevated characters. In them love is shown in its higher and purer manifestation — its end is the Family, but its conflict with the cloistered life of learning is brought out in the plainest and most decisive manner.

2. The Princess of France, with her three attendant ladies, has arrived, and is waiting to be received. They have heard of the vow which the King and his three lords have taken ; it were a great pity if such an untoward occurrence would prevent the two triple sets from pairing off. But we are here astonished to learn that each of the three ladies has met her man before, and knows his character. The truth is, therefore, that they are all in love, and the present visit really is a courting expedition ; the women are going to storm the castle of learning, and bring its

inmates under the yoke of marriage. Now appear the King and his lords; the business of the Princess, though it looks like a pretext, is canvassed; the other couples indulge in a merry combat of wit. Boyet, who acts as the mediator for the ladies, sees through the whole transaction, and expresses its object; he is a courtier of long experience, and particularly skillful in matters of the present kind; in token of his dexterity he is entitled an "old love-monger," and "Cupid's grandfather." He has observed that the King was touched with the sacred flame at the interview, and recounts with ready eloquence the manifold signs which he noted, as proofs of his opinion.

The result of their meeting it is not difficult to foretell; love has asserted its power in the breasts of all the students. Biron, in his soliloquy, gives expression to what the others feel; against his will, against his knowledge, he has been conquered and confesses his humiliation. He contemns the act; he berates himself and berates women — it cannot be helped, yield he must. The "almighty little" god, Dan Cupid, has punished him for his vow; now begins sighing, suing, sonneting. It will thus be seen that love has entered the student-world and destroyed it; the individual purpose is gone, being banished by an intruder. Still, each person is seeking to preserve an outward semblance of fidelity to his oath, and to keep his internal condition from the knowledge of the rest of his associates. Thus ends what was stated to be the first movement—Navarre, which represents the realm of learning and austerity, is in conflict with various phases of love; the latter has already secured its first triumph in the emotional nature of each individual.

II. I. We can now pass to the second movement, in

which new elements are introduced. The low group is here subordinate in importance, though not entirely dropped; but its peculiar function of representing sensual love quite disappears. The letter of *Don Armado* is the last incident in this connection; the Poet probably thought that he had shown to a sufficient degree the manifestation of mere passion. But now he proceeds to introduce a new group of comic characters, and with them a new principle. It is pedantry, with its two representatives—*Holofernes*, and *Sir Nathaniel*, the curate; to them is added the constable, *Dull*, who, though ignorant, is also pedantic, as is seen mainly in his use of words. Here learning is exhibited in one of its phases—it has made a monstrous puff-ball out of mediocrity. Such is the possible outcome of a life devoted to mere erudition—of a life which cuts out and throws away the essence of human existence, namely, institutions. Learning is only a means; if it be made the absolute end, it produces a *Holofernes*—that is, it renders man comic. For his object is absurd and nugatory; yet, at the same time, he is supposed to be the most intelligent of human kind, being so highly educated. The relation of this group to the drama must, therefore, be comprehended; the result of the King's cloistered study is here seen—*Navarre* would become, not an *Academe*, but the *Pedant's Paradise*.

In *Holofernes* all the extravagancies of a formal erudition are united. Crumbs of Latin are scattered through his conversation—the lean pickings from some grammar; then he writes poetry, which is full of alliteration and play on words, but without sense. The Poet has, doubtless, satirized in him certain literary tendencies of the time; and it has been often supposed that he had before his

mind well-known individuals in real life. Holofernes also is made to criticize Biron's sonnet, which he condemns as "neither savoring of poetry, wit, nor invention." His salient trait is manifest; he is a man who feeds on the husks of learning with far greater relish than on the kernel; indeed, for him learning has no kernel. Even Costard, the ignorant boor, as well as Moth, ridicule his folly, Sir Nathaniel, the country curate, who is his admirer and follower, is a step lower. In general, therefore, the first comic group represented love in its one-sidedness, namely, sensual passion; the second comic group represents erudition in its one-sidedness, namely, pompous pedantry; both taken together show the comic extremes of love on the one hand, and study on the other. The implication seems to be that a judicious admixture of the two is the golden mean.

2. The elevated group of characters may next be considered. The King and his young lords have been already captivated, though each tried to keep his condition concealed from the others. Now the truth is to be revealed to all, and the new situation to be accepted. Biron is wandering alone in the forest; he is in a deadly struggle with his emotion; he cannot free himself from its power. He hides himself when he sees the King coming; the latter, too, is groaning from Cupid's "bird-bolt under the left pap," and gives vent to his feelings in a sonnet to his mistress. In like manner the King secretes himself when he sees Longaville passing that way, who also confesses to the trees his griefs, and reads his poetical effusion. The latter, too, hides himself when, last of all, Dumaine appears, who does just like the rest, for he also must have a lyrical expression of his passion. At

this point each comes out of his hiding-place in order; the revelation has to be made; all are equally guilty of the trespass; all are in love, and are trying to conceal it from one another. Biron—who, on account of being the first one in the forest, thought to escape detection—is also discovered; the fragment of a torn letter tells the whole story.

What now about the oaths? The violation has taken place; is there any defense? Biron—who, it will be recollected, protested against the vow at the beginning—at once undertakes to vindicate their conduct. His lengthy speech contains the best statement in the play concerning its own purport. He declares that, when they swore “to fast, to study, and to see no woman,” they committed “flat treason 'gainst the state of youth,” it was a violation of the right of love. The true objects of study, the real writings over which young men should pore, are those masterpieces of Nature—woman’s eyes:

“From woman’s eyes this doctrine I derive:
They are the ground, the books, the Academes,
From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire.”

The transition is here stated clearly enough—Navarre has turned into a love-land; the Academe has changed to some female eye, into which each one of them is diligently looking. Thus the student-world dissolves apace, and its lofty ambition melts to a cloud. Such is the result on the one side—if study be asserted against love, the latter will be triumphant.

But there is something more in Biron’s speech which ought to be considered—“this universal plodding prisons up the nimble spirits”—men become “barren prac-”

ticers'' of learning, who find no reward of, their heavy toil; in other words, the product of mere study is the dry pedant—a Holofernes. Thus the second movement gives a double aspect of the two colliding principles of the drama—study triumphs, terminating in pedantry; love triumphs, terminating in the dissolution of the ascetic realm.

III. 1. The third movement now begins. It brings to a true conclusion what has gone before, and also has a distinct tinge of its own. The notion of retribution gives it the peculiar element which marks it as a separate part. Both the previous comic groups unite, though Holofernes, with his erudition, is the leading character. He suggests the representation of the Nine Worthies of antiquity for the entertainment of the King and Princess; learning proposes to exhibit the heroic personages whose fame is a part of the world's history. How will it grasp and embody them? It is the Poet's own Dramatic Art which is here called upon to present anew the great characters of the Past; can a Holofernes succeed in such an attempt? The result may be confidently predicted—it is the narrow, ridiculous conception of the pedagogue which is seen in the execution of the plan; the mighty individualities of old are burlesqued—are turned into comic figures of the lowest order. Such are the fruits of mere erudition in its chosen field; it cannot comprehend itself, nor impart to others what is great and true in the Past; it feeds on husks and leaves the kernel untouched. But the retributive element must not be forgotten—subjected to the criticism of his audience, his work perishes; the representation is torn to tatters by the sneers and sarcasms of the spectators. Such is the fate of this product of learn-

ing ; it is destroyed by the people to whom it is addressed, and who carry into realization what logically lies in such an attempt. Thus mere erudition has received its penalty.

2. Of the elevated group the men were last seen in the act of mutually acknowledging their passion, and of defending the violation of their oath. The right of love was asserted to be higher than fidelity to a vow. But the greater half of their labor remains to be done ; they have not yet won their ladies — off they start to the trial. Here comes the opposition. The ladies in every possible manner trick, cajole, and deride ~~the lords~~ ; the latter first appear in mask as Russians, but they are unknown ; then they return in their ordinary garments and continue their suit ; a sparkling display of wit, puns, and conceits fills the time with the merriest sport. It is unnecessary to follow the Poet in his details, or to note the slight differences of personal appearance and character in this sportive group ; the result is plain — the book-men, with all their learning and wisdom, are made to suffer a defeat, in their own special province, at the hands of the ladies, who worry them with the sharpest sayings, and exhibit the greater intellectual keenness. But the object of wooing is marriage — to which the men are ready to advance at once, making, in the meantime, loud protestations of their love. But they cannot be believed, for they have just broken an oath ; the ladies argue that they will be quite as ready to disregard a second vow. Thus the logic of their action is brought home to them ; before credence can be given them, they must show by a year's penance the sincerity of their professions, as well as a change of life. Then a marital pledge will be possible. Thus Love's Labor is both lost and won — there is the punishment for

the violation by deferring the union; but ultimately this ascetic world is to pass into the Family as the higher sphere, in which the true solution of the collision must be found. Both threads of the last movement, however, will be seen to possess a retributive element — pedantic erudition beholds its own achievements reduced to nothing, and the violated oath demands a year's chastisement.

The general scheme which underlies the drama will now be manifest. Learning, in the furtherance of its own end, calls for the abnegation of the Family; but the latter, through its all-powerful emotion — love — rises up and puts down its enemy. Institutions are the higher principle; neither culture nor religion must place a bar to their entrance, for they are really the essence of both. It is a theme upon which the Poet has often touched, and in which he shows his fealty to the thought of the modern world. Nor will the attentive reader fail to supply the historical illustration. Monasticism was long supposed to be the chief handmaid of learning; an ascetic life was thought to be the main condition of the pursuit of science. But human progress has solved the conflict — has reconciled a career devoted to study with the Family; the Academe is not found in the secluded cloister, but can exist in the domestic institution. Nor has the drama failed to show the one-sided results of the two conflicting principles: Love, without the Family, is sensuality; and study, without some corrective — that it is the Family which is this corrective is rather implied than declared — degenerates into fantastic mummery.

Such seems to be the essential organization of the present drama. But there is many a little turn which has not been accounted for, and which seems to have but a

slight relation to the main action. As was stated in the beginning, the work has not a few capricious elements ; it has eddies, counter-currents, and much light surf dashing in every direction ; still, the main volume rolls on and completes its natural course, around which is playing all this sportive wantonness. The object has been to trace merely the general current of the stream for any reader who may happen to want a little guidance ; while he is left to explore by himself all the small bays and sinuosities, as well as to snuff the exhilarating spray which hovers over its waters.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

There is a tradition that Shakespeare wrote this comedy at the request of Queen Elizabeth, who desired to see Falstaff in love. The truth of the tradition cannot be positively affirmed, but it declares a plain fact concerning this drama. The Falstaff of *Henry the Fourth* has lost something; he is placed in a situation where his comic character cannot develop itself with its former freedom. The statement, therefore, concerning Her Majesty's interference, if it does not give the cause, is at least the consequence, of the play; the judgment of it has been embodied in the form of a tradition—the Poet has been placed under some external restraint, which crippled his artistic conception and characterization.

But it is, nevertheless, a great favorite on the stage, and also in the private study of the reader. For comic incident, it can hardly be surpassed; the tricks and schemes follow in quick succession, and with increasing interest to the close; the action is both rapid and diversified. A spirit of rollicking humor pervades the whole work—wit, caricature, and, sometimes, perhaps a touch of satire, are not wanting. The persons who participate in its scenes are of ample number, and of sufficient variety; there is no dullness or tediousness, though Falstaff is deceived thrice in quite the same manner. But the weak side of this drama is generally considered to be its characterization; the Fat Knight, who is the center of inter-

est, has descended somewhat from his former high pedestal; the other characters are sketches, outlines, even caricatures—that is, the shapes here are not so fully individualized into human beings as is usual with the Poet; the chief stress seems to be laid upon movement and diversity. But there is a unity of theme and structure which places upon this drama the stamp of Shakespeare, who can be more truly detected by his dramatic architecture than by his characterization.

Casting a look at the external grouping, we observe that there are, in the main, four sets of people who are brought together. One is the Welsh Parson and his foolish associates; another is the two families of Windsor, which furnish the Merry Wives; the third is Sir John Falstaff and his boon companions, to whom mine Host of the Garter may be added; the fourth is Doctor Caius and his household. Fenton stands outside of them all, and is of a different mould. But the internal movement of the play does not run in these grooves; the groups just mentioned will separate and coalesce again, according to the necessity of the idea which is to be embodied. This demands mainly two threads, though somewhat complicated—that of Falstaff and his adventures, and that of Mistress Anne Page and her suitors. Dropping now this merely external side of the drama, we may proceed to develop its inner structure along with its thought and characters.

The action lies wholly in the realm of the Family, of which relation there are presented two phases—that after marriage, and that before marriage. In the first case an assault is made upon the marital bond—from without by incontinence, and from within by jealousy; in the person of the wife the integrity of domestic life is attacked, both

by the libertine and by the husband. In the second case there is a violation of the fundamental condition of marriage on the part of both father and mother, who disregard the right of love in the person of their daughter. Such is the double wrong which the course of the drama must now overcome in a twofold manner. On the one hand the foolish voluptuary, as well as the jealous husband, must meet with a comic retribution for their deeds, and on the other hand the choice of the maiden must be shown triumphant against the will of the parents. Mrs. Ford and Mistress Anne Page are the heroines; the former maintains the honor of married life against a double assault, the latter maintains the honor of love against a double assault. Both, therefore, in their different spheres, uphold the essential principle of the Family against the various colliding obstacles. Thus the action starts with violation, and passes through conflict to triumph and ultimate unity in the domestic relation.

The structure of the play can be seen best by dividing it into three movements, since the division into acts is made according to theatrical requirements, and seldom corresponds to the demands of thought. The first thread of the first movement has for its central figure Sir John Falstaff, who is here shown in his transition from thief to lover. He—together with his companions, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol—is in conflict with Shallow and Slender, who have been robbed and otherwise abused by the roguish crew. Sir Hugh Evans (the Welsh Parson) and Page (the Windsor burgher) are the peace-makers. But from this occupation Sir John soon passes to love-making; he becomes infatuated with the notion that two married women, Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, are enamored of his

portly person. The second thread has for its central figure Mistress Anne Page, who finds herself besieged by three suitors—the simpleton Slender, the fantastic Doctor Caius, and the sensible youth Fenton. From the rivalry of the first two lovers springs a duel—a challenge is sent by the French Doctor to the Welsh Parson. The second movement has also two threads, the first of which gives the adventures of Falstaff in his new occupation; he will continue to make advances to the Merry Wives, who will trick him twice, and thereby punish him—he will be cast into the Thames as dirty linen, and beaten as the old Witch of Brentford. Running parallel to the designs of the Fat Knight are the exploits of Ford, the jealous husband, who is also deluded and punished for his foolish suspicion. The second thread continues the story of Mistress Anne Page and her three lovers—one of whom, Slender, has the consent of the father; another, the French Doctor, has the support of the mother; the third, Fenton, has the powerful assistance of Mistress Anne herself. There results a conspiracy of each against the others—who the winner will be cannot be told till the end of the play. An under-current belonging here is the duel, which terminates in a practical joke played upon the combatants by the Host of the Garter, who afterwards has his trick brought home to himself. The third movement brings together the two previous threads—the third punishment of Falstaff is made the means for the solution of the conflict between the suitors; the schemes of both parents are defeated by the daughter, and she is joined in marriage to Fenton, who alone possesses her heart. Reciprocal affection must overcome all obstacles, as it is the true basis of the Family.

I. 1. Beginning with the first thread of the first movement, we find the rural justice, Shallow, in high dudgeon over certain wrongs which he had suffered. He evidently has a very lofty opinion of the dignity of a country squire, as well as of the rank and antiquity of his family. But these qualities are coupled with some obtuseness and considerable ignorance; the result is a grotesque compound of pomposity and absurdity. His complaint against Falstaff is not groundless: "Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, broken open my lodge;" but the Fat Hero laughs at him and his threats of legal procedure; his own folly will foil his attempt without any outside interference.

A second complaint of a similar kind is now made; it comes from Shallow's cousin, Slender, who also is a gentleman and a simpleton. He has, indeed, hardly sense enough to make a passable comic character; in him rustic simplicity quite reaches the border-land of irrationality. The portrait is vapid—even ugly. But he has money; he has rank. Our future interest in him arises entirely from the circumstance that he becomes one of the suitors of Mistress Anne Page. At present he prefers a charge "against you [Falstaff] and your cony-catching rascals, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol. They carried me to the tavern and made me drunk, and afterwards picked my pocket." It is clear that Sir John and his band of retainers were making matters lively in the quiet neighborhood of Windsor; carousals at the inn, supported by thieving in the village, were the occupation of the jolly vagabonds.

Along with these two figures, which have a decided dash of caricature, is placed a third figure, which, in this respect,

corresponds with them. It is Sir Hugh Evans, the Welsh Parson, who, in consonance with his holy calling, is made ~~to play~~ the part of a mediator; he tries to soothe the anger of his friend Shallow, and directs the attention of the latter into a more peaceful channel. His scheme is nothing less than to "leave our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage between Master Abraham [Slender] and Mistress Anne Page." In his work of reconciliation he is aided by the worthy burgher, Mr. Page, who invites the whole company to a dinner of venison pasty with wine, in order to "drink down all unkindness." The Welsh Parson is a good soul, but uses bad English. There is in him a strong leaven of sincerity — indeed, of piety; but his words and his actions never fail of some ridiculous incongruity, which forces us to laugh at him in spite of all our regard.

This preliminary conflict is now silenced — it drops out of the play, and we advance to the real theme. Sir John has seen Mrs. Ford, and he intends to make love to her. He has, too, beheld Mrs. Page, whom also he purposes to woo, after his fashion. He says that both have given him the wink of invitation, which we must suppose to be purely the product of his own imagination, though the very free behavior of the two Merry Wives hereafter would indicate that they may have extended to him some "~~most~~ judicious œliads." The peculiar quality of Falstaff's love is plainly shown by the circumstances — it goes out towards two women, and married ~~women~~ at that. It, therefore, doubly violates the principle of the Family; one unmarried person of the opposite sex is evidently the ethical limit for man and for woman. Sensuality is, accordingly, the word to designate Sir John's nature.

But there is another motive which appears here — the Knight, in both cases, seeks access to the husband's purse through the wife. These two elements run through the entire delineation of his character.

This change in his life brings about a dismissal of his attendants; Nym and Pistol refuse to be made the instruments of his suit, and are sent off. Bardolph had previously turned tapster. The discharged followers will take their revenge by informing the husbands of Falstaff's purpose. Thus we have witnessed Sir John's transition from thieving to wooing; but his love can only be lust. Also, we are able to account for the double motive to be observed in his future career; he carries along his desire for ill-gotten wealth into his amorous adventures; booty and beauty are his two almost equally balanced principles. In fact, his avarice seems sometimes stronger than his sensuality. But the two traits consist well together — both are merely different forms of gratification of appetite against ethical subordination. Another remark ought to be made here — it is at this point that we can observe the connection between this play and *Henry the Fourth*; in the latter Falstaff is also shown as the thief, whereas now he is seen changing to the lover.

2. The second thread leads us at once to "sweet Anne Page," about whom is spinning a web of marvels which rarely falls to the lot of a simple country girl. It has already been noticed that the good Welsh Parson, in the interest of peace, has proposed a match between the dear maiden and Slender; and now the latter has been conversing with her, in a manner which has effectually satisfied her mind, upon the interesting subject of hot meat and the bear, Sackerson. The Parson very reasonably deems himself unequal to the task of completing the enterprise,

and he seeks the aid of Mrs. Quickly, famed throughout the community for her dexterity in such matters. The old gossip is a clearly-drawn character; she finds out the young marriageable people of the town, wins their confidence and their secrets, and kindly offers her mediation. She has become celebrated in this line of business; all three lovers in the play seek her assistance. The present enterprise, however, is one which is too great for her; general satisfaction is impossible; still, she promises her aid to each, and is not averse to taking money. But Anne Page, with an instinctive slyness, has not revealed her inclination; she, therefore, stands out of the reach of the old match-maker, and controls her own destiny.

Now, Mrs. Quickly is attached to the household of the Frenchman, Dr. Caius, who, like Sir Hugh, is defective in English, and, moreover, lacks mental ballast. Volatile, irascible, always effervescing, he pops and foams like a bottle of champagne from his native land. He has, however, the pretension to courtly manners — a servant must be at his heels; he also fully recognizes the code of honor. Then the mixed fragments of language — French and English — which fly out of his mouth give the impression of a strong caricature. But the main link which connects him with the action is that he, too, is a suitor for the hand of Mistress Anne Page. Now comes the explosion. The Doctor goes to his closet and finds the messenger of Sir Hugh to Mrs. Quickly ensconced there in secret; he drags him out and the whole matter is revealed. Then results the challenge. The good Parson, in seeking to bring peace and happiness to others, has himself become involved in war, which particularly threatens destruction to the English tongue.

Such are two of the lovers; now comes a third — Master

Fenton. He, too, is seeking the kind offices of Mrs. Quickly, who, of course, gives him encouragement and takes his money. It is clear that he is in some doubt about the success of his suit, and Mrs. Quickly also thinks to herself that "Anne loves him not, for I know Anne's mind as well as another does." The young girl is clearly mistress of the situation—she will dispose of herself according to the right of love, and bid defiance to the fine-spun schemes of father, mother, and match-maker. But it must not be thought that her conduct is the result of reflection; on the contrary, it is the true instinct of her womanly nature which guides her, amid so many snares, with complete success. She does not say much in the play; her love makes her act, but it does not seem to demand utterance. Sentimental scenes are, therefore, suppressed in this drama, and, indeed, they would hardly be in unison with its general tenor.

Let us try to express the full scope of the first movement in a few words. There is unfolded a conflict with the Family in its real and in its potential forms—after marriage and before marriage. Falstaff assails two married women, and thus seeks to destroy the domestic bond already established; the parents of Mistress Anne Page violate the right of their daughter in disregarding her love, and thus they sap the foundation of marriage. Both parties, therefore, are in collision with the domestic institution, yet in very different degrees—the one party attacks it as realized, hence becomes criminal, and should be punished; the other party attempts to thwart its true realization by their individual ends, and, hence, must be foiled in their endeavor.

II. 1. The second movement may now be examined,

the first thread of which continues Sir John's adventures. The Merry Wives receive his love-letter; they are indignant, and resolve upon revenge. The retributive nature of his punishment is plainly suggested by Mrs. Ford: "I think the best way were to entertain him with hope till the wicked fire of lust have melted him in his own grease." The pith of their characters is, ~~they are not~~ squeamish, but they are honest. Their language can ~~scarcely~~ be called elegant, their jests are not always refined, and their imaginations are not remarkable for delicacy. It must be confessed that they have probably given some provocation for the attack of the old sensualist, in their intercourse with him. But their supreme comic trait is their love of fun; they forget insult and a soiled reputation in a good opportunity for some sport. The letter of Falstaff furnishes an occasion, which is seized on the spot. Dame Quickly is sent to him, and she prepares the way for a meeting at the house of Mrs. Ford.

Now appears the counterpart of Falstaff, namely, the jealous husband, Ford. He is informed of the Fat Knight's scheme by the dismissed attendants of the latter, and his suspicions are fully aroused. He disguises himself, goes to Sir John, and verifies his information. Here another incident is introduced which must not be forgotten in estimating the character of Falstaff—he is now seen acting the part of a procurer; this is the third capital fact of his career in this play. Ford is the contrast to the easy-going Page, who, however, has his foible in a different direction, namely, in disregarding the right of his daughter. But the jealous husband is the true counterpart of the seducer—the one embitters and undermines the domestic relation on its internal side, the other

assails it from without. Hence Ford and Falstaff belong together in thought, and manifest separate phases of the same violation.

But the Merry Wives are equal to the occasion, particularly Mrs. Ford, who will punish both her assailants in a supreme manner. Twice is Sir John led into the trap prepared for him; twice does he receive the full penalty for his act. With dirty linen, a symbol of his own character, he is tossed into the water, which, however, will not cleanse him as it does a soiled garment. Once more he returns to his evil ways; this time he is beaten for a sorceress—the incarnation of Satan. In a parallel manner Ford makes two public raids upon the honor of his wife; besides the keen torture of jealousy—an infernal fire of itself—he is shamed by the jeers and reproaches of his neighbors. Ford at last repents, and expresses contrition to his wife; his reward is that he is henceforward admitted to share the sport which is now drawing to an end.

2. The second thread resumes the story of Mistress Anne Page and her wooing. The suitors present their claims with vigor; the father is won by the large amount of land which Slender possesses, and is ready, for such an offset, to marry his daughter to a simpleton. His motive is impure; he would sacrifice his child, and, hence, he must be thwarted in his attempt. The mother has selected Doctor Caius, being influenced thereto by the prospect of display and the hope of introduction at court, where the Doctor is known; thus her vanity is tickled, nor does she forget that he has money. Both parents manifestly violate the right of love, since they have some ground foreign to it for the marriage of their child. Mistress Anne,

however, has made her own selection; it is Fenton. Not much is said of this young man, but what is said redounds to his credit. He openly declares that he seeks the hand of Anne not for her wealth—though he confesses that such was at first his object; further acquaintance, however, has revealed in her character something above all property. He has a higher position at court than Doctor Caius; he is better descended than Slender; and has, moreover, good sense, which belongs to neither of the other suitors. The Poet has, therefore, marked this pair with the unfailing sign of future union, namely, reciprocal affection. The love of each is requited—they are one in emotion, and, hence, belong together.

In this connection we must note the result of the duel which sprang from the intrigue around Anne Page. The Host of the Garter was chosen to make the preparations; he first fools the combatants by sending each to a different place; then he brings them together, utters jibes at both, and finally goes away, taking along their weapons. They can do naught but become reconciled; a basis of agreement is furnished by their common grievance against the host of the Garter; they at once unite in a resolution to be revenged upon him. "The soul-curer and the body-curer" are now fast friends; both are foreigners, and murder only English in trying to murder each other. How they got even with the host of the Garter is not expressly declared, though we may suppose they had something to do with the deceit practiced upon him in the name of the German Duke. But this is an obscure and unsatisfactory part of the drama.

III. The third movement recounts the story of Falstaff's final deception, which is also made the means of settling

the struggle among the suitors of Anne Page. Thus the two threads run together in a common solution. The Merry Wives easily succeeded in playing the third and wildest trick of all upon Falstaff. At midnight, in the forest, he represents Herne, the Hunter, with horns on his head. The song of the disguised fairies declares the penalty of lust, and the thought of the whole incident is the retribution of sinful desire; the moral intended is directly expressed. At the same time Fenton and Anne Page, who are endowed with mutual love, slip away to the church and get married. She violates the will of her parents, but is true to the higher principle of the Family. Here, too, the lesson is inculcated in the plainest words, and the whole extract may be given as Shakespeare's view of his favorite collision:

"The offense is holy that she hath committed;
And this deceit loses the name of craft,
Of disobedience, of unduteous title,
Since therein she doth evitate and shun
A thousand irreligious, cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her."

In no passage has the Poet expressed more clearly his moral convictions upon this subject; disregard of the parental will, in the present case, is an offense, yet a holy offense; the deception practiced by Mistress Anne is justifiable — indeed, praiseworthy; for thus she shuns all the evils of a forced marriage. The true unity of the Family is more important than adherence to an abstract maxim. Formal morality, when it collides with the domestic institution of man, must be quietly circumvented. Here we touch the great practical question of life, which comes home, at times, to every individual: What is the true

course of conduct in such a conflict of duties? One side or the other must be subordinated, yet both sides have their validity. Shakespeare's method is to put what he deems the lower principle under the higher, and to use the less important as a means for the more important. The danger of such a doctrine is manifest—men will be too apt to see a collision of duties when there is none, and proceed to trample upon morality from specious pretexts. But the difficulty is not removed by shutting the eyes or by calling names; it must be met by action, and must be solved by thought.

But what shall be said of the character of Falstaff as shown in this play? He is portrayed in love, but his love is mere sensuality. Its nature can be easily inferred from the fact that it is called forth by two married women. But there is added his desire for money; he tries to reach the husband's purse through the wife, and, at the same time, takes the gains of a procurer. Still, all his cash is spent for bodily gratification, and we come back to sensuality as his fundamental trait. The comic element of his portraiture consists in his retributive deception; his passion spreads the net in which he is caught. He is outwitted at his own game, tricked with his own cunning; his fine-spun intrigue simply entangles himself. But the personal trait which gave him most pleasure was his cunning, and, hence, he does not hesitate to attempt carrying out his monstrous scheme. Bitter is his confession: "See now how wit may be made a Jack-a-lent when 'tis upon ill employment." It is, indeed, his deepest humiliation that his cunning has been unable to save him from this supreme disgrace. "Have I laid my brain in the sun and dried it that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'er-

reaching as this?" He belongs, in this play at least, to Involuntary Comedy of Character; he pursues an utter ~~delusion~~ without knowing it; the solution is that he be brought to a complete consciousness of what he has been doing, and of the absurd nature of his conduct. Such is the comic retribution which here overtakes him. Nor does he fail to declare the moral of his story: "This is enough to be the decay of lust and late walking through the realm."

Thus the two groups have removed the obstacles which stood in the way of the Family, and harmony has been attained. The Merry Wives have vindicated their integrity and punished the aggressors; particularly Mrs. Ford is the strong character who has defended her domestic honor against the assaults from within and from without. Mistress Anne Page has triumphed over the schemes of her parents, and is joined in wedlock to the chosen one of her heart. In both cases—before and after marriage—the principle of the Family is victorious. The Romanic element in this play also is not wanting; the story of Master Brooke and his disguises has been traced to an Italian source. Still, the work as a whole has a strong English flavor, and deals in rough characterization and caricature. On the whole, it is a Comedy of Situation, or rather of situations; the disguise of Ford is one side of the intrigue, and the simulation of the Merry Wives is its other side; while the thread of Mistress Anne Page has also its concealments. Still, the whole action does not turn round a masked individual—it is made up of a series of tricks and deceptions.

With this drama the treatment of the Pure Comedies of Shakespeare is brought to a conclusion. It will be seen

that the ethical sphere in which they all are placed is the Family, though other elements may, for a short time, shine in upon the main current of the action. The dramatic structure, too, is observed to be fundamentally the same in all; the threads and movements are the lines upon which the play must be followed if we wish to reach the conception of the Author. These are, indeed, the web and woof of which the close, yet varied, texture of the work is composed; around these must be grouped the characters, which are thus shown at once in their relation to the rest of the play and in their inner development. If the critic merely picks out and describes in succession the separate persons, the living movement of the whole and its parts are lost; the gradual evolution of individual character disappears from the mind, or is grasped as a dead result; while the structural principle of the drama utterly perishes. A critical method which leaves out any essential element of Shakespeare is manifestly imperfect; and it ought to be added that a critical method which injects any foreign element into Shakespeare is unquestionably vicious.